This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

3 3433 07496895 3

O'Hara Family

TALES

BY

THE O'HARA FAMILY.

SECOND SERIES.

COMPRISING

THE NOWLANS, AND PETER OF THE CASTLE.

——"Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars."
OTHELLO.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II. only.

PHILADELPHIA:

H. C. CAREY AND I. LEA, CHESNUT STREET.

SOLD BY G. AND C. CARVILL, NEW YORK, AND HILLIARD, GRAY, & CO. BOSTON.

1827.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
598897 A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1932 L

MIFFLIN AND PARRY, PRINTERS.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

THE NOWLANS.

CHAPTER I.

But sorrows wear down; and when they do, the persons they have most keenly afflicted engage, according to the law of their nature, in the usual duties of their situation. After some months, Anty Nowlan returned to her nunnery school, leaving Peggy quite re-established in health, and much cheered by the constant visits of the dry humourist, Friar Shanaghan, and of his young, handsome, and ingenuous friend, David Shearman. It was suspected indeed, that, half-recollecting the early childish intimacy to which we have heard the friar allude, and charmed with Peggy's sufferings, virtue, and (we must not forget) beauty too, David felt a peculiar attraction in his visits; while some went so far as to whisper, that if Peggy Nowlan thought herself disengaged from her solemn nuptial vows to a bad husband, she would experience little ill-humour at hearing him explain what that peculiar attraction meant. But, in her present situation, a widow indeed, yet a wife too, Peggy never gave the slightest proof of such a sentiment; and David was, on his part, correspondingly cautious and delicate.

About a year after Frank's flight, there appeared, however, good cause to leave her bosom free, if, indeed, Peggy had any hidden secret to intimate. Mr. Long, still and more than ever an invalid, often called to see her; and looking in, as usual, one evening, he asked, with much solemnity of manner, a private in-

terview with Peggy. When they were alone, he took out a letter with a black seal, and, warning her to prepare for a shock, put it into her hands. She read the following:—

"To Charles Long, Esq.

"My race is ended, and I am at least bound to warn you that it is. An intimation of my being alive, and likely, in any situation, to continue to live, could not interest, and might disturb you; but the announcement of my coming death, invited by myself, will give you relief. My exit from this world will be disgraceful; but the disgrace cannot extend beyond my own person; it will not reach even my name, which, since I parted you, has been carefully concealed. So, you have but to keep your own secret, and no one will ever reproach you on my account. Show this letter to Peggy Nowlan, and, when she reads it, tell her it is all that shall remain of

"Your accursed nephew,
"FRANK."

The letter was dated from London, but from no particular place in London.

Peggy felt indeed shocked, but horror more than grief overpowered her. She wept too; but it was in sorrow for the dark death of a bad man, who had injured her and lost his own soul, rather than the tribute of affection to a departed friend. Her solemn assertions that she had never loved the person, whom extraordinary circumstances compelled her to accept as a husband, have been recorded, and they will be taken as the perfect truth, for indeed they were so. Hence, she could experience none of the violent grief that comes from our first thought of being left desolate, irreparably desolate, by the loss of a sharer of our heart. Nor, after the momentary escape of the peculiar feelings attributed to her, did Peggy continue to weep, or remain insensible to the natural relief brought to her in the melancholy letter she had read. We wish her to appear above affectation of any kind; and

it was impossible for her heart, yet young, [illegible]d not wholly forsaken by some of the hopes of youth, to acknowledge as a cause of lengthened regret, the death of a man whose life was at once her shame and her bondage; and who, by a right, that he was not even generous enough to adm[illegible] to her advantage, doomed her to all the miseries of a lonely and unenjoyed existence.

In a little time she was composed enough to hint to Mr. Long her anxiety for an explanation, according to his judgment, of the letter.

"What," she asked, "could be meant by 'a death invited by himself?'" and her kind uncle-in-law, who, by the way, often requested her to address him as a relative, answered, that he was not quite certain on that afflicting point. The expression might allude to the wretched Frank's death by his own hand; (Peggy, who had not thought of this, shuddered) or to his death decreed by the laws of his country, and brought on by his own acts. Either was a horrible supposition, and both Mr. Long and Peggy showed, by their silence and their suppressed groans, that they felt it was. But Mr. Long at length added his presumption, that the second case supposed was the more likely; and he produced to Peggy a London newspaper, containing reports of the trial and execution for forgery of a young man, who, on account of the coincidence of dates, and the minute description of his age, manner, and conjectured rank, the miserable uncle had little doubt would, notwithstanding a different name, turn out, upon inquiry, to be his nephew.

Mr. Long proposed to make inquiries, then? Peggy again asked; and he told her that, in a strictly private and cautious way, such was his intention. Indeed, a proof of the terrible event, apart from Frank's own assertions in the letter, became indispensable, in order to arrive at certainty; and certainty it was his duty, for many reasons, to attain. For Peggy's own sake, he deemed himself bound to make a secret investigation; and accordingly he would, that day, write to an old

and established friend in London, every way qualified to take his instructions, and attain his object.

He left the house, after cautioning her not yet to communicate the matter to her family; parting from Peggy with a kindness and respect that, since the discoveries and explanations at his house, had marked his manner towards her.

The increased seriousness which attended Peggy's silence before her friends, was seen by all; and her mother, friar Shanaghan, and David Shearman, questioned her about it, but got no answer, except that she could not yet inform them of the cause. Meantime, she awaited with natural anxiety the answer from Mr. Long's London friend; not that she had any of the slight doubts started by her amiable adviser; for, to Peggy's mind, the letter did not admit of a question, and was decisive on the main point; but, in very truth, she wished to watch the effect of the news on one certain person.

In about three weeks, Mr. Long submitted to her his friend's answer. It left no uncertainty on his mind. Although Frank's real name, as his shocking letter premised, remained hidden from every one in London, still the accounts supplied by the London officers of the individual executed immediately after the date of the letter, confirmed the presumptions of the newspaper report, and seemed to propose downright certainty by adding, that this person was a native of Ireland, educated in an English college, and once heir to a considerable Irish property. So Mr. Long now left Frank's letter in Peggy's hands, together with that of his correspondent, and empowered her to break the news to her family, agreeing with her, however, that, outside her family, Frank's death should merely be stated as an authenticated fact; the hideous manner of it entirely suppressed.

As she accompanied her good friend to the door, another good friend entered, Friar Shanaghan. Peggy was glad to see him at this juncture. In a few moments, with the old man one of her council, she laid her documents before her father and mother. Little was

said at any side; but all seemed as much pleased as shocked at the sudden announcement. Mrs. Nowlan could not, indeed, repress some harsh intimations of her thanks to Heaven for the liberation of her child; old Daniel Nowlan wept, and took Peggy in his arms: the Friar, like Macpherson's ghost, "hummed a surly tune," that still told, however, to those who knew him, more content than dissatisfaction; and then, suddenly recollecting that he had to call at neighbour Shearman's that evening, he undid the grey's bridle from the hasp of the door, slowly deposited himself between his wallets on her back, and she, as slowly, wended with him out of sight. Peggy thought she could guess the Friar's business at neighbour Shearman's, and she held down her head to hide the alternate blushes and paleness that the guess, its associations, its doubts, hopes, and fears, sent from her heart to her cheeks.

"David will come to-morrow morning, if he comes at all," thought Peggy, as she laid her head on her pillow, a little disappointed that he had not come that evening. But David did not come the next morning; nor the next; nor the next: in fact, a week wore away without a visit from him. Peggy wept plentifully in her chamber, but also rallied her heart into spirit, and framed some high resolutions. "He is shy to ask the love of one like me, one that was ruined and shamed by a lost creature," she said; and this first view it was that drowned her in tears;—"but let him;" and the tears were now hastily dried up: "if David Shearman takes that part, Peggy Nowlan thinks him more below her, than she is below him; my misfortune is not my fault; and I was not bad nor sinful, nor, with my free will, even that poor sinner's lawful wife. God pities me, but does not blame me; and all good men the same: my heart tells me that: so let him, aroon; he'll never know I wanted other thoughts from him at any rate."

It was early in the morning, after the lapse of a week since David's last visit, that Peggy held this little soliloquy in her chamber; and she had scarce concluded, when David Shearman rode hastily into the yard,

leaped from his horse, and with a flushed cheek, and a brisk step, entered the kitchen. She heard him from her room bid the old people good-morrow; and then the voices of all sank into a low confidential tone, and so continued for some time. Peggy's views of things began to change; and when, with a good-humour that for years had been a stranger to the old woman's face and manner, her mother entered her chamber to say that Davy was outside, and was asking about her, after a week's absence from home on particular business, the indifferent way in which Peggy said she would be in the kitchen by and by, belied the fluttering of her bosom, and, we fear, did not ensure to Miss Nowlan the flawless sincerity we have just been over-zealous to invest her with.

When she slowly came into the kitchen, with her "shining morning face," (not unattended to, by the way, during the time she had kept David waiting,) and a bunch of flax in her hand, she found it occupied by David alone. This discomposed, a little, the studied serenity of her manner; but her greeting of him was still as quiet as it was mild; and Peggy proceeded with much care and composure to attach the head of flax to her wheel, seat herself, pass the thread through the flyer, and, finally, begin to spin very hard.

David was not, by nature, a forward lad upon any occasion: upon the present one, he was shy and embarrassed. He asked her many questions about her occupation; such as "did the thread often break? wasn't it very hard to keep it always of a thickness? and how in the world did she manage to keep the wheel going round without tiring her foot?" and to these curious inquiries Peggy gave quiet, intelligible answers, accompanied by quiet, peace-making, yet cautious smiles, until, at length, David abruptly broke the real matter in hand.

"Father Shanaghan had been talking to him, he said, last night, late, just after he came home, and told him all about the two letters Mr. Long received from London; (Peggy reddened and spun harder;) and she knew well," David continued, "how he felt on the subject.

To make a long story short, it left them both free, and allowed him, without offence, to ask her——"

David was interrupted by a phenomenon of which he had just been conjecturing the probability, that is to say, the snapping of Peggy's thread on the flyer; and (but we fear it is rather an old phrase) the simultaneous snapping of the thread of his argument was the inevitable consequence. Both remained silent until she had repaired the accident; and then Peggy spun on both threads together.

"I'm no child to mistake what you mean, David, and no flirt to pretend I do. But, for the present, we can say little more on the head of it. You make me happy, I won't deny; happier than I thought I ever could be." Tears ran down her cheeks as her head remained bent over her spinning. "Yet hear what I have to say: first and foremost, there's your father; he's richer than my father, and, we hear, higher in his notions too."

"Dear Peggy," interrupted David, "Mr. Shanaghan and I have already spoken to him; and the knowledge that Mr. Long intends to leave you a handsome fortune, Peggy, entirely reconciles my father to our coming together."

Peggy at last stopped her whirring wheel, and looking straight in David's face, asked, "Why, then, what's that you say, Davy Shearman?"

Her admirer explained that friar Shanaghan, to whom Mr. Long had communicated his intention, was his authority for what he stated. Peggy, after listening attentively, burst out into hearty tears, only interrupted by grateful prayers for her benefactor.

"But, though that's a great blessing, David, particularly when we didn't expect it," she resumed after a pause, "still I have something to say. So, hear me out, without stopping me again, I bid you. No matter what you, and Mr. Long, and Father Shanaghan, and all other good people think, there will be some of the neighbours saying that my unfortunate marriage with that poor man is a stain on me, and must be a stain on you, David, and may be on whoever is to come

after us—let me go on, I bid you again: and though you think very differently now, you may——no, I will not say you can ever entirely change your mind: but some things that neither of us foresee may help to bias it; or your father, or some of your family, may take second thoughts. Now, Davy, I'll not run such a chance: no earthly creature must have it to say that I took any one short; it is my duty to myself to leave no danger in the way of being called a designer, or a shame to the people I'm to go among, or beholding to their pity, or their good nature, or any thing else they may feel for me, at the present time, for notice and love. It shall never be said that Peggy Nowlan was under a favour for the good will of her husband, or her husband's family: and the long and the short is this, Davy,—let us all take time to consider with ourselves; and if your liking can keep as it is for two years——"

"Two years!" interrupted David; and thereupon he proceeded to urge all the arguments and expostulations usual in such cases; but Peggy remained firm.

"It is not a thought of the moment, Davy; and you'll find me fixed in it. Besides, no matter what kind of a man he was that's now gone to his long account, he was my husband, and though the world knows I never loved nor liked him, it 'ill be only decent and proper, and expected from me, not to make a new engagement for some time to come. And there's another reason; and without offence, or a cold heart to you, the strongest, may be; at all events, God sees it ought to be the strongest. My poor brother John"——Peggy melted again, and the rest of her speech went on in tears—"Tale or tidings we have never heard of him since the black day he left his lodgings in Dublin: thinking to get a letter from him, day after day, we made no enquiries since, or nothing like what we ought to make; so that, whether he's in Ireland, or gone abroad, or on the earth, or could under the earth, or stretched in the bottom o' the sea, none of us can tell, nor any body for us. And all this I have long been thinking about, for I think a good deal, Davy. Before you spoke, it was in my mind to ask a friend to go with

me to Dublin, and let us do our best in tracing him out, or knowing his fate, and the fate of the poor young lady that went along with him: and now I tell you, plump and honestly, if there was no other reason for you and me taking our time, I'll never hear of changing my condition until the poor priest John is found to be living or dead; or until two years, at the least, are past and gone without tidings of him; and more, Davy, I hope and expect that whoever has my good opinion at heart, will do their endeavours to get us satisfaction in this matter, if it is to be got, or leave no stone unturned to get it, any how."

Again David pleaded eloquently, but in vain. It will be perceived that Peggy kept rather a high hand with him; and, indeed, no ladie-love of one of the giant-fighters of old, ever insisted on the probation and services of her ridiculous knight with more sedate pertinacity, than did she on the terms now proposed to David Shearman. Seeing her really in earnest, the young man made a virtue of a necessity, and offered himself, in her place, to accompany to Dublin the friend to whom she had alluded. Mr. Kennedy, the clergyman, was the individual meant: Peggy and he had before spoken together; and so, after such signing and sealing of the compact, so long under discussion, as generally ends similar compacts, David Shearman went off that moment to seek Mr. Kennedy.

In a few weeks both set out for Dublin, and, after a long stay, returned with but vague tidings. The result of all the enquiries they were able with much planning and difficulty to make, was, that in all probability, a John Nowlan, whose name appeared entered as a passenger to Newfoundland, about the time in question, might prove to be their John Nowlan. Having taken care to obtain the name of the ship in which he sailed, together with the names of the captain and owners, Mr. Kennedy proposed to Peggy, on coming home, to write, conjointly with him, to the proper official persons in Newfoundland, enclosing letters for the exile, and giving all the necessary details and references; and accordingly despatches were forwarded,

and Peggy awaited, in patient anxiety, the expected answers. None came to hand. Six months; a year; more than a year elapsed without a line, a word to relieve her suspense; and the conclusion of David's probation drew very near, when, by other means, some news seemed to transpire of the fate of her unfortunate brother.

Anty, her school accomplishments supposed to be completed, came home at this period, now grown, since last we saw her, into a pretty and interesting girl of seventeen. Upon the evening of her arrival, both sisters walked out in the by-road before their father's door, to give and impart the minute and delightful confidence that a separation of some years keeps in store for a final meeting between friends. As they talked over all their little secrets and feelings, Peggy's engagements with David Shearman and their brother's unknown fate forming the principal theme, three or four weather-beaten men, dressed in the rags of sailors' jackets and trowsers, passed the stile on their way to a wretched village, and stopped and asked for charitable assistance. Their ship had been wrecked, they said, during her voyage from Newfoundland to Dublin, upon the northern coast of Kerry, and, while some of their hands walked for other points of the kingdom, they were on their way to the metropolis, hoping to get a re-engagement. The two girls pressed each other's arms, which were closely interwoven, at the mention of Newfoundland, and, in much agitation and some fright, gave the poor men a little money, who immediately left the stile, and proceeded towards the group of dirty cabins called a village. Peggy had it on the tip of her tongue to ask a certain question, in reference to a certain name, but her heart failed her. She was taken by surprise in the first place, and then the men looked so strange and hard featured, the night fell so fast, and her situation from the house, though at no great distance, was so lonely, that, particularly with her young sister to take care of, she could not bring herself to encourage their stay. She was therefore about to turn and walk home, when another rag-

ged sailor, or else one of the former who had come back, limped wearily to the stile; and leaning his chin on his hands, and his elbows on it, gazed wistfully towards the house. Again the sisters pressed each other's hands, stepping farther from the stranger, but keeping their eyes on him. A long and deep sigh reached their ears; their hearts fluttered, and they looked more earnestly. But that worn and rigidly-marked face, shaded by long streaming hair, and but vaguely shown in the increasing twilight, gave no certainty, though it aroused wild and poignant anticipation. The sea-buffeted man once more sighed loudly, and began to move; and darting from their hitherto secret place of observation, they ran, with the panic of lonely women upon them, to the shelter of their father's roof. That night, lying down side by side in the same bed, they did not sleep; their conjectures and their hopes were too lively or they blamed themselves for their sudden and unaccountable fright; or, in every flutter of the door to the light night breeze, rose up on their elbows to listen for the timid knock of a fallen and repentant brother, craving, after years of exile, trial, and penance, merciful admittance into the paternal house. They were wholly disappointed, however, in all their little romantic expectations;—even the morning showed them no tired and sorowful man, such as they had seen last night, walking up to the threshold; they went to the village and learned that the poor sailors had rested but a few hours, and then one and all pursued their weary way; and whether their brother really appeared before them, or that some wave-tossed wretch, in his momentary transit by their peaceful-looking house, had

> "Lean'd o'er its humble gate and thought the while,
> Oh that for me some home like this would smile!"

Between these two cases the innocent girls remained in painful doubt, and spent many conjectures.

But another incident soon made them dwell most on their first supposition. Their uncle, Murrough Nowlan, had been to Dublin in the caravan, no one could tell why, not even himself; about a week after the lit-

tle adventure noted, he returned, and stopped to sleep at his brother Daniel's; and at a late period of the night came out, from time to time, and between stated sups of his punch, with a strange story. As he was about to walk, he said, from the place he slept in Dublin, to the place where the caravan was to set out for the country, he wanted some one or other to carry a trunk for him, wh[illegible]e carried his valise himself. Looking about so early in the morning, he could see no one at all likely to do the job, when a kind of worn-down sailor passed him, and begged a penny for God's sake. Murrough agreed to give the alms for God's sake, provided the supplicant could manage the trunk; and no sooner said than done; they walked off to the caravan, side by side, both laden; the luggage was stowed; Murrough in the van, along with eleven fellow passengers; the penny was bestowed on the temporary porter; and as the driver's whip cracked, and just as the curious machine began to lumber off—"The blessing o' poor John Nowlan be with you!" said the mendicant sailor.

Well? every body asked: Well, answered Murrough, that was all he knew about it.—What! did he not stop and get out, and speak to his supposed nephew? Yes; he did ask the driver to stop, and he wouldn't.—Then, in truth, he did *not* get out? No; how could he?—Was he even sure of the person who called himself John Nowlan? He must at once have recollected his face? He never saw it; he happened to be looking on the ground (no great accident neither) when the poor fellow stopped; while they made their bargain, therefore, he saw no more of him than the feet; while they walked to the caravan he never once thought of minding him; while he got in, his behind was turned to him; and when the words were spoken, he was hid from the speaker, who stood at the side of the vehicle.

No farther could Murrough go; but even upon this information Daniel Nowlan resolved to start for Dublin the next morning. Peggy pleaded hard to accompany her father, but he mildly refused her request, and her mother crossly lifted up her voice against it; and as David Shearman happened to be in another part of

the kingdom, and was not expected home for some time, Peggy, with a sad and ominous heart, saw the old man set out alone on his long journey, in the middle of a hard winter.

In a week at least, Daniel Nowlan was to come home, or write home to his family; but the week passed and they had not seen nor heard from him; and while the anxiety of the two girls became excessive, their poor mother, long shaken with the sickness of the heart, and, as Peggy before intimated, half blind with incessant weeping, lay in her bed, a victim to peevishness, real distemper, and almost despair, at the new misery of the long and unexplained absence of her husband. Another week wore away in terrible suspense, and the third was coming to a close, when David Shearman's father rode over to inform Peggy, that a slight acquaintance of his, who stopped a night at his house, on his way from the metropolis to a remote county, brought the sad intelligence of Daniel Nowlan having been left by him ill of typhus fever, a week ago, at the old Brazen Head Inn, in Dublin. It was night when Peggy heard this; she did not take a moment to consider, but immediately proceeded, assisted by her weeping sister, to pack up a few things, and after twelve o'clock she bade that sister adieu, at the stile on the Dublin road before spoken of, where a night coach, for which they had some time been watching, stopped at their hail, and afforded Peggy a seat, but, owing to previous occupation, only an outside one.

But for the illness of their mother, Anty would not have been prevented from bearing her sister company on the first long and unprotected journey she had ever taken; and it was with anguish and impatience she now saw herself compelled to remain almost alone in their deserted house, attending the sick pillow of one parent, while another was dying, perhaps dead; and waiting, from day to day, the arrival from Dublin of tidings that concerned alike the fate of a brother, a father, and a dearly-loved sister.

Her only companion was the household maid of all-work, Cauth[illegible]annigan; but from the cast of this girl's mind, good[illegible] as she might be, Anty could de-

rive little relief; and, in fact, the poor wench's best consolation was her pitying and respectful silence, or her tears. But Anty did not long experience the sameness of grief she had anticipated; for, just as it had set in, it became broken up into a startling interest.

Upon the evening after Peggy's departure, she walked out to see Cauth a little way on her path to milk the cows: and when, with a slow and heavy step, Anty re-crossed the threshold into the kitchen, a tired soldier was sitting, in the twilight, upon a low stool in the middle of the floor.

A scream, half suppressed, only because she had presence of mind to recollect her sick mother, escaped Anty, and she stepped back in much alarm.

"You do not know me, Anty," said the soldier, in a low and melancholy tone.

"I do not indeed, Sir," answered the timid girl.

"And yet," he resumed, "though I have not seen you these seven years, I know my second sister, Anty Nowlan."

Again she could scarce keep in a wild shriek.

"John!" after a moment's pause, stepping into the kitchen.

"Your unfortunate brother John, Anty;" he held out his arms, and she fell on his neck.

"I have been some time hiding in the neighbourhood," he continued, "but, day after day, could not take heart to face my father and my sister Peggy: at last, I even walked a good distance out of the neighbourhood, to get a friend to come here beforehand for me, until I heard they were both gone to Dublin, to look after me, I believe, and no one at home but you, Anty, and our poor mother, confined to her bed; then I thought I would try if your heart, Anty, the youngest and, as I always said, the tenderest of the family, would first open to give me a forgiveness, a crust, a cup of water, and a night's lodging."

Tears started to his eyes during this address, and Anty also wept as she asked,

"John, John, could you doubt my heart, or one of our hearts?—Oh, we prayed, morning, noon and night, to see you restored to us."

"Then you, at least, forgive me, Anty?"

"Can you ask the question, John? you have suffered as much as you have sinned—oh, how much suffered! and your God forgives you, because you are punished and a penitent; and why should not your sister?"

"That's cold enough, Anty; I ventured to hope that, without a clause of any kind, without catechising me at all, without stopping to ask whether or no I was sorry for the part I took, or thankful or no to those that drove me from home, friends, and country, for one youthful error—I hoped that without a word or thought of all this, my gentle sister Anty, at least, would give a sister's welcome to her unfortunate brother."

"And I do, dear John, I do—my heart's best welcome, for nothing but joy to see you:" she again threw her arms around his neck.

"Then, that's like the gentle Anty I always believed you to be; thanks, dear, dear sister!"

He returned her soft embrace, in a way that, to the sensitive convent girl, was, from a brother, strange. She felt some astonishment, disengaged herself from him, took a near seat and proceeded to remark:—

"You say you have been long in the neighbourhood, John; did you come first in that dress?"

"Yes; in no other; for no other have I: I am on furlough from my regiment, just returned to Ireland out of the Indies."

"You are a soldier, then, not a sailor?"

"I have never been a sailor."

"Then how much we are all mistaken: word came to us, from more than one quarter, that you went three years ago, as a sailor, to Newfoundland, and had lately come back to Dublin, after being wrecked on the coast: indeed, we half believed you had passed our door, some time ago, in a sailor's dress."

"I know all that, Anty, and I know that, in the notion of finding me as a wrecked sailor, in Dublin, my father left home near a fortnight ago."

"And if you knew it, John, why did you let the old man go on such a journey, for nothing?"

"I did not know it till after he had gone, Anty."

"But, surely, you could then have set us right, and then we could have set him right, if you even sent us a message after he went; and he would now be at home with us, and poor Peggy, too; instead of his being sick of the fever in Dublin?"

"I was as much afraid of letting Peggy know I was in the country, as of letting my father know; indeed more; for her notions of what's good and right, and all that, were so rigid, I feared she would never see my face; but if my poor father is ill on my account, I'm very sorry, Anty; very sorry, indeed; tho' I couldn't have intended it, you see."

Anty paused, a little dissatisfied, though she knew not why; and, as if noticing this, he continued:

"But I see it's the cold face is to be shown to me, after all you say, Anty."

"Did you go into the regiment in your own name?" she asked, half expressing a sudden thought.

"Was I a fool, child, to do any such thing? When my name was blackened by the world, and by them that called themselves my friends first of all, do you think I had no reason or wish to hide it? What was left to me, but to hide it and my disgraced head, in any far quarter of the globe that would open to me? and how could you think that the John Nowlan who gave his name, at full length, for Newfoundland, was the hunted wretch that only wanted to baffle his persecutors for ever? as if, indeed, there was only one John Nowlan in the world."

"What has become of the poor young lady, John?" enquired Anty, after another pause.

"Letty is dead."

"God rest her soul in peace!" ejaculated Anty, piously crossing herself, and looking up.

"She was a Protestant, you know, and you, a good Catholic, must not pray for her," he said, in a scoffing smile and accent; "only I like to see you do or say any thing, Anty, that makes you look so very handsome, child."

"Fie, fie, John," answered Anty, not noticing the hand he had stretched out to her; "to talk in such a

light way *of* her, and *to* me, in the present circumstances, and after all that has happened."

"Ay, ay, rebuke and scold me, Anty, and make that the return you promised; nothing shall ever make me think the less of you, or love you with less of heart than I now do, and as I ever did; indeed, Anty, the thought of getting your forgiveness and love, supposing all the rest to cast me off, was the only thought that cheered my banishment and my despair. But hush! there's my poor mother's voice crying out for you from the lower room;—and I see Cauth Flannigan, at a distance, coming home with the pail on her head. Dear Anty, for the present you must not tell I am in the house; the sudden news might kill my poor mother; and Cauth is a great *ballowr*, and would blab all about me before the proper time; so, I'll just step into my old bed-room, here, until you leave our mother for the night, and send Cauth to her loft; and then, Anty, I expect from your pretty hands a candle, and a little refreshment, of which I stand in need, and from your prettier lips a little more conversation."

He arose, and with a jaded step passed into the little chamber often before alluded to, Anty assenting readily to the arrangement: and after he had gone in, she heard him lock the door, and take the key out of the lock.

She hurried to attend her mother, and, after receiving a peevish rebuke for her long absence, and administering some necessary services and comforts, came back to the kitchen, sat on the low stool, and closely communed with herself.

"The poor sinner has come at last; but, the good God save us! in what a mind and heart has he come!—There is no sorrow for his sin upon him; not a bit; he only seems hardened and careless, and enraged with those that did their duty by him, instead of kissing the rod of punishment. Oh! I wish, I wish he had tried his fate in any way but among the soldiers!—often have I heard how their company and example, and their wild bad ways, particularly in foreign parts, will corrupt the best, not to talk of a poor creature made to their hands, by his early troubles and passions,

and ready for any mad course. They have quite case-hardened him, and quite changed him, every way. 'Tis seven years, to be sure, since I saw him before, and then I was a mere child, and he a young boy with blushes on his cheeks, and peace and lightness in his heart, and it's hard to tell what changes years, and the hardships of foreign parts alone, may not bring on, without any other cause;—yet, little as I recollect of what he was before I went to the convent, I'm sure he had not then such a bold manner, such a careless air, and such a frightful way of speaking. Can I bring John Nowlan's face before my mind at all, as it was at that time?—No, I believe I cannot. Phelim's is quite plain to my memory, because his early death fixed it in one shape; but all I have heard of John—his terrible actions, his wild passions, his long sufferings,—all come between me and his young features; every time I think of him in such and such circumstances, his face appears altered and strange; he is pale, or he frowns, or he grinds his teeth; and there's not a trace left of the boy-priest at nineteen, so mild, so smiling, and so handsome. Even the sound of his voice I forget, or else, as he spoke this evening, it is quite changed too——Blessed Heaven!" interrupting the train of her reverie, as a doubt, before faintly felt, arose in her breast—"what am I thinking of at all? who else can it be? why should any one else come here and say he was John Nowlan? who else could know the house as he does, and all in it, and all about it? This is mere weakness of me, mere folly; I will forget it; and the voice he had just now, is not entirely strange to my ear, either; I *have* heard it before, though my bad memory says it was not from John Nowlan, at nineteen. 'Tis all great weakness. I must stir myself, and attend to the poor wanderer's comforts. My mother will not call for me again till towards the morning; and I will send Cauth to bed, and soon bring him a meal's meat, and something to drink."

Anty accordingly exerted herself; Cauth retired for the night; the refreshments were prepared by Anty, and with a timid knock she stood at the door of the little chamber.

"God bless you, my beautiful child!" he said, as he cautiously unlocked the door and let her in;—"God bless you for coming at last, to feed the hungry, and comfort the sorrowful."

With few words Anty laid down her light, her food, and her whisky, and sat to see him eat and drink. His soldier's cap was now taken off, and the candle, shining full upon his face and forehead, showed features still fine and commanding, though emaciated, and reduced to one pervading sallow hue.

"You're thinking how much I'm altered, Anty," he resumed, as he partook of the food.

"I am, indeed, John. I'm a'most thinking there's not a trace of what I try to remember you were."

"Ah, dear Anty, the heart-break, and many years' toiling under a scorching sun, makes sad work of the boy, during his growth into the man."

"Your hair, itself, was once a different colour, I believe, John."

"That can be turned, too, Anty. I've seen a young man's hair change, not merely from one shade to another, like mine, but into the locks of old age, in one night; into a head of hair as grey as our poor father's, whom Heaven rise up in health and strength, I pray."

"Amen," said Anty: and, while both remained some short time silent, she had another reverie.

"Poor fellow, poor fellow! poor priest John! he has come home hungry to the father's house. And what it is to sit here and look at the man he *has* come home, and to think of all that brought him to appear so! Poor outcast! his case has, indeed, been hard; may be, too hard; and may be it's not much wonder, after all, that he feels a little of the sullenness he does feel. God will soften his heart, and work a change in him; and our kindness, too, with the help of God: and may be the day's not afar off when he can be brought back to his old nature entirely, and a'most as happy and as good in himself, and before the world, as ever he was. He is our brother, at any rate, and kindness and love are his due. I love him in the heart, and pity and

compassionate him more than when he was away: though, from my cradle, we always loved one another. Poor priest John!" and her eyes swam in tears as she gazed on him.

"Come, dear Anty," he resumed, "drink a glass to my welcome home."

"I seldom taste the liquor, dear John, but my heart can't refuse you."

He filled her glass, and, with clasped hands, they drank to each other.

"Ay," looking around him, "there are all my old musty books, with their musty thrash in 'em: and there hangs the old watch I left behind me, in my hurry; now, however, it comes back to its owner;" and he stood up, took down the watch, and put it into his fob. Anty knew it was her father's watch, and had never been John's. His last words, and this action, startled her again. Shocked, and sitting silent, she found herself compelled to admit to her own mind that her brother had returned a profligate in more than one sense. His speech was blasphemous; his appropriating the watch, dishonest. As she sat, without a word, her soul sickened towards him: and she remained almost unconscious of his movements, until, sitting close at her side, he passed an arm round her neck, and called on her to drink another bumper to their future love and happiness. Then she tried to draw back, as she answered—

"No, John, I have taken too much already; and the heart can wish its wish without any help of the kind: keep down your arm, John; it hurts my neck."

"Curse on it, then, for its rudeness to the handsomest neck in the world: and, there, Anty, it shall hurt you no longer, only don't *you* draw away entirely. I thought you would drink the toast I offered: but no matter; your heart, you say, goes with the words, and I believe you. Dear Anty, the more I look at you and listen to you,"—drinking rapidly—"the more I'm inclined to ask your heart to join mine in another wish."

"What is it, John?"

"I'll tell you, my little beauty"—as with a kindled expression his eyes met hers—"a wish that, with your kind feelings towards me, you did not think of me as you do, in another way."

"Oh, if that's all, God above knows how sincerely I—But stop, John, I say"—growing more alarmed at his glance—"stop, and recollect yourself, or I must leave you."

"Go away? Nonsense. Stop *you*, Anty, and hear me out. You don't understand me. I meant that I had a wish you did not know me for your brother."

"And I had the same," she answered, in a low, solemn voice.

"Then, dearest girl," misconstruing the sense of her reply, "you *could* feel kindly to me, for my own sake, even though I was not your brother John? Without that accidental tie, from what you have seen of me, you *could* love me, Anty, even if I was nothing to you? you own so much!"

He drew her closer to him. She started up: very opportunely for her purpose of escape, a loud scream sounded from her mother's chamber; and then another and another.

"Whisht, John! that's our mother's voice; something has terrified her; or she is dying, may be! God forgive my neglect! let me go: I must run to her; good night."

"Surely, Anty," still holding her, as she struggled, "you will come to see me for one moment more, before we say Good night?—nay, you must promise——"

"Well, I do; but let me go now to my poor mother; she cries out louder and louder:—good-b'ye!"

He attempted to salute her, but she avoided him, and hurried off to her mother's chamber. The feeble old woman lay in a state of great alarm. Strange faces, she said, had darkened the window at the foot of her bed; she could but faintly distinguish them, but still she saw them in the lightsome winter-moon, as, more than once, they came close to the glass, and gazed in

upon her. Anty, though her own brain was half crazed with contending fears and suspicions, tried to believe that her mother had raved, and told her it was all a dream. The peevish sufferer scolded her for saying so, and commanded her to sit by her bed. Anty did sit down, until the weak voice sank in exhaustion, which ended in sound sleep; and then she began to tremble at her loneliness, and at the whole scene from which she had just escaped. Remembering, though endeavouring to doubt, her mother's story, she looked in terrified foreboding on the window; and, whether it was imagination or reality, strange persons seemed to steal by it. After this, she thought she heard the noise of one going about the house. Her heart beat high in alarm. She recollected there was no fastening to the door of her mother's chamber, and she arose, half tottered to her own, locked herself in, and sat on the side of her bed.

It is impossible to give a clear account of Anty's thoughts in this situation. In fact, though shaking with a fear of the character, actions, nay, identity of her guest, her thoughts could not arrange themselves into order. A great horror of him fell upon her, no matter in what light he presented himself; and that was all she knew, or could pause to calculate. The sudden event was too much for her simplicity and childish inexperience.

She did not know how long she had thus sat alone in her chamber, shivering, and starting at every sound, when the noise of opening a window, in the direction of John's old room, riveted her attention. With a cautious step she gained her own window, and through a small hole in the muslin curtain peeped out. It was still bright moonshine: her position enabled her partially to command the point about which she was interested; and she saw, indeed, that the lattice was open, and three persons, one of them a woman, standing at it, evidently conversing with the guest inside. Redoubled terror seized Anty's heart; yet she continued to look until the people went away, doubling by

the corner of the house, and so, rather suddenly, escaping her view.

She had scarce reseated herself on her bed, when she heard the well-known creak of John's door, and, afterwards, stealing footsteps coming from it. They seemed to pass into every room, staying some time in each; and Anty thought she caught the jingling of the little stock of plate, kept in a drawer in the kitchen, and then the opening and shutting of other drawers and cupboards. Presently, to add the utmost to her horror, the handle of her door was turned, but, after a few cautious efforts, left quiet, and the foot went into her mother's chamber; returned; again stole by her door, while a bunch of keys sounded in the passage; and Anty soon heard unlocked a little private desk in which she knew her father kept, now and then, considerable sums of money. After this, all became silent, for about an hour; but at the end of, perhaps, some such lapse of time, the step again approached her door, and stopped before it; the handle again turned, and a voice spoke in whispers through the key-hole.

"Anty, dear Anty!" She was silent, controlling even her breath.

There was a knock, and the voice continued:

"You are not asleep, Anty, I'm sure of that; you cannot sleep so sound after my knock; open the door, and let me have a word with you."

She took heart to say, "Dear John, what is the matter?"

"I'm frightened to death in that old room of mine; it brings such thoughts and recollections, I cannot close an eye; let me in, for charity's sake, and I will just throw myself across the foot of your bed, and try for a little rest, which I want badly."

"You know I have lain down, John, and will not, surely, expect me to rise."

"I'll wait till you are ready to open the door, but you *must* open it, dear Anty."

"Well, I'll tell you, John; go back to your own room, and in a few moments you shall see me there,

and we can sit up the night together, talking of old times."

"You promise this?"

"Depend on me."

He retired. She snatched a bonnet; gently undid her casement; issued out; avoiding the other window, gained a by-path leading towards David Shearman's father's close by the Dublin road; and after a few cautious steps, ran forward in the impulse to call upon her good neighbours for protection for herself and her mother. She had made but little way, when a soldier appeared closing her by another path from her own house, and at the same moment shots were fired further on, in the country about Long-Hall. Utterly confounded, Anty lost all recollection of a purpose, and only raced more wildly towards the Dublin road, not noticing that, at the report of the shots, her pursuer suddenly slackened his pace. As she gained the high fence that separated her from the road, a strange man and two other soldiers, all armed, started up before her; she shrieked aloud, almost wild with terror; the man abruptly asked who had come to her father's house that night? She answered but with another scream; he took her arm, and told her that Long-Hall had been attacked by robbers, and that he suspected one of them was then skulking under Daniel Nowlan's roof; poor Anty did not hear him; or, if so, could not properly apprehend him; the quick succession of so many startling incidents, the shots, the soldiers, the loud talking, all bewildered her; her catechist and his companions left her, as if in impatience; she sank nearly senseless on the road side; the horn of the usual night-coach sounded, she sprang up, and only capable of feeling that, as by such a conveyance Peggy had gone to seek her father in Dublin, she would now go seek protection from Peggy and him, the terrified girl called out to the guard, and in a few seconds, seated inside, was on her way to the metropolis. Her poor mother's helpless situation escaped her thoughts for the moment, though when far upon the road, too far to turn back, her heart sorely smote her, during the remainder of

the journey, at a recollection of the selfishness she could not have controlled.

CHAPTER II.

MEANTIME Peggy Nowlan had her own trials and escapes on the road to Dublin.

Late in the second morning of her journey, the coach upset within about a stage of the metropolis, and she was violently thrown off, and deprived of sense by the shock. When Peggy recovered, she found herself in a smoky-looking room, dimly lighted by a single dipped candle of the smallest size. The walls were partly covered with decayed paper, that hung off, here and there, in tatters. There were a few broken chairs standing in different places, and in the middle of the apartment a table, that had once been of decent mould, but that now bore the appearance of long and hard service, supporting on its drooping leaves a number of drinking glasses, some broken and others capsized, while their slops of liquor remained fresh around them.

Peggy was seated with her back to the wall; she felt her head supported by some one who occasionally bathed her temples with a liquid which, by the odour it sent forth, could be no other than whisky; and if she had been an amateur, Peggy might have recognised it as pottheen.

"My God, where am I?" looking confusedly around, was her first exclamation.

"You're in safe hands, Peggy Nowlan," she was answered in the tones of a woman's voice: "an' I'm glad to hear you spake, at last."

Turning her head, she observed the person who had been attending her. The woman was tall and finely-featured, about fifty, and dressed pretty much in character with the room and its furniture; that is, having none of the homely attire of the country upon her, but

wearing gay flaunting costume, or rather the remains of such; and there was about her air and manner a bold confidence, accompanied by an authoritative look from her large black eyes, that told a character in which the mild timidity of woman existed not. Yet she smiled on Peggy, and her smile was beautiful and fascinating.

"How do you know me, good woman?" again questioned our heroine, for we believe she is such.

"Oh, jist by chance, afther a manner, miss; onct, when I went down to your country to see a gossip o' my own, the neighbours pointed you out to me as the comeliest colleen to be seen far an' wide; an' so, Miss Peggy, fear nothing;" for Peggy, as she looked about her, and at the woman, did show some terror: "an I'm glad in the heart to see any one from your part, where there's some kind people, friends o' mine; an' for their sakes, an' the sake o' the ould black hills you cum from, show me the man that dares look crooked at you."

This speech was accompanied by such softness of manner, that Peggy's nervousness lessened. She gained confidence from the presence of one of her own sex looking so kindly on her, and, though years had been busy with her fine features, looking so handsome too. Her next question was, naturally, a request to be informed how she came into her present situation.

"You were brought here, jist to save your life," answered the woman; "a son o' mine, coming along the road from Dublin, saw the couch tumble down; he waited to give it a helping hand up again; and when it druv away—"

"And has it gone off, and left me behind?" interrupted Peggy, in great distress.

"Of a thruth, ay has it, my dear."

"What, then, am I to do?—"

"Why, you must only stay where you are wid me, until the day; an' you're welcome to the cover o' th' ould roof, an' whatever comfort I can give you; an' when the day comes we'll look out for you, Miss Peggy, a-roon. But, as I was saying, when the coach

dhrew off again, my son was for hurrying home, when he heard some one moaning inside o' the ditch; an' he went into the field, an' there was a man lying, jist coming to his senses, an' you near him, widout any sense at all; an' when the man got bethter, my son knew him for an ould acquaintance; and then they minded you, and tuck you up between them; an' sure here you are to the fore."

"It is absolutely necessary I should continue my journey to-night," said Peggy.

"If you're for Dublin, child, you can hardly go; it's a thing a friend can't hear of."

Peggy reflected for a moment. Her usual caution now told her, what her first suspicions had suggested, that, in some way or other, the house was an improper one, and, perhaps, that good-nature had not been the only motive in conveying her to it. The woman's last words seemed to show a particular determination that she should remain. It would be imprudent, then, to express a design to go away; she might be detained by force. Nor would she suffer herself to become affected by her fears, lest she might incapacitate herself for escaping by stealth. Prompted by growing suspicion, she stole her hand to her bosom to search for her purse; it was gone: and Peggy became confirmed in her calculations, though not more apparently shaken by her fears.

"I had a small hand-basket," she said, "containing a few little articles, and my money for the road; it's lost, of course, and I am left pennyless; if I go to the spot where the coach fell, maybe I could find it."

"We can go together," said the woman, "if you are able to walk so far."

Peggy had made the proposal, not in hopes of recovering any thing, but that she might be afforded a chance of walking away; if, indeed, the story of the coach having driven on proved to be true. Now, however, she was, in consistency, obliged to accept the attention of her officious protector; and the woman and she walked to the road along a narrow, wild lane, at each side of which a few old decayed trees and bushes

shook their leafless branches in the wintry wind, while the footing was broken and miry, and overgrown by weeds and long grass. It seemed to have been a winding avenue to the house she had left, once planted with rows of trees, when the mansion was better tenanted and in better repair, but which had disappeared, from time to time, beneath the axe or the saw of the marauder.

Arrived at the spot required, she commenced a seemingly careful search; but, finding nothing, returned at the continued urgency of the woman, who linked her closely, to the house they had quitted. Ere Peggy re-entered, she took a survey of the fabric: it was, like every thing around it and within it, a ruin. She could see that it had been a good slated house, two stories high, but that in different places the slates were now wanting; indeed she trod, near the threshold, upon their fragments, mixed with other rubbish. Some of the windows were bricked up, some stuffed through their shattered panes with wisps of straw and old rags; and of the lower ones, the shutters, which were, however, attached to the wall, outside strong iron bars, hung off their hinges, and flapped in the blast.

Again entering the room in which she had first found herself, two men appeared seated. Peggy, in something like the recurrence of a bad dream, thought she recognised in one of them the air and figure of the person who, on a late and fearful occasion, had stood so near to her in the Foil Dhuiv. But as she did not feel herself entitled to draw any certain deductions from feature, complexion, or even dress, Peggy, after a moment's faltering pause, struggled to assure herself that this misgiving was but a weakness of her agitated mind, and firmly advanced to the chair she had before occupied.

The second man was very young, his person slight, and twisted into a peculiar bend and crouch as he sat; his face pale and sharp, resembling that of the woman who called herself his mother; and in the side-long glance of his cold jetty eye there lurked a stealth, an enquiry, and a self-possession, as, in reply to Peggy's

curtsey and her look of observance, he, in turn, observed her, and gave, slowly and measuredly, his "Sarvent, miss."

He and his companions sat close to the drooping table. Two of the glasses that had been capsized now stood upright, and were frequently filled from a bottle of whiskey, of—as one might augur by the smell—home manufacture. The person whose first view had startled Peggy, made more free with the beverage than the other; the pale young man visibly avoiding the liquor; but often filling for his friend, and urging him to drink bumpers.

"Well, Phil, my boy," said the woman, addressing the pale lad as she entered after Peggy, "did Ned tell you the raison yet, why he was on the top o' the coach to-night, instead of being far off on other business?"

"Oh yes," answered Phil, in a dry, careless tone, "he tould me all how an' about it;" and a wink, that, from its freedom from humour, was disagreeable, did not escape Peggy.

"I call that toss we got together a d—d hearty 'un ——my eyes, miss," said the other man, addressing Peggy, and offering her some liquor.

"Were you the person who lay so near me?" refusing his politeness.

"Ay, that I was, to my cost; and though no great harm might come o' lying so near you, little 'un, at another time, I'd rather not have such a throw for it, however."

She shrunk while he spoke, and while his eye of gloomy, stupid excitement, dwelt upon her; but did not omit an answer.

"Then I have to thank you, and, I suppose, this other gentleman, for my safety."

"Oh, that's all gammon, easy to clear the odds with such a pretty 'un, you know."

Phil made no observation; but his glance went from the speaker to Peggy, and then to his mother, with a slow, remarkful, and cheerless expression; and again Peggy saw interchanged, between him and the woman, a wink, followed by a dead glare.

"Go, Phil, my boy," resumed the old woman, "take Ned and yourself up stairs, an' the bottle wid you; you must have the hot wather, when it's ready, and the sugar along wid it: this young woman and myself 'll stay together."

Phil arose, taking the bottle and glasses: he was sidling out of the room before his companion, when, at a renewed signal from the woman, he hung back, allowed the other to stagger out first, and then he and she paused together, beyond the threshold of the room, in the passage, where Peggy could hear them exchange a few earnest, though cautious whispers.

"An' now, Peggy Nowlan," resumed the woman, coming back and reseating herself, "as you don't seem to like the whisky, you must have whatever the house can give you."

"I would like some tey, ma'am."

"Then, sure enough, you'll get it; we won't be long lighting the fire, an' biling the wather, an' we'll take our tey together."

There were some embers dimly gleaming in the blackened fire-place, to which the woman added wood and chips, that, by blowing with her mouth as she knelt, soon blazed; and, according to her promise, a dish of tea, not badly flavoured, was manufactured, of which, with much seeming hospitality and kindness, the hostess pressed her young guest to partake. Peggy felt thankful, and strove to compel herself to feel at ease also: but, amid the smiles and blandness of her entertainer, there were moments when her thin and bloodless, though handsome lips compressed themselves to a line so hard and heartless,—moments when a deep shade of abstraction passed over her brow, and when her eyes dulled and shrunk into an expression so disagreeable, that the destitute girl internally shivered to glance upon her. These momentary changes did not, however, seem to concern her. She argued, that they rather intimated an involuntary turn of thought to some other person or subject. The woman never looked on her without a complacent smile; and it was after her getting up occasionally, and going to the door

of the room, as if to catch the sound of voices from above, that her countenance wore any bad character. But, whatever might have been passing in her mind, Peggy prudently resolved not to allow her hostess to perceive that she observed these indications of it. Her glances were, therefore, so well-timed, and so quick, that they could not be noticed; and her features so well mastered, as always to reflect the easy smile of her companion. Her manners, too, she divested of every trait of alarm or doubt; and even the tones of her voice were tutored by Peggy into an even, pleased cadence; and the questions she asked, and the topics she started, calculated to lull all suspicion.

As part of her plan she would show no uneasiness to retire; and it was not until the woman herself offered to attend her to bed, that Peggy rose from her chair. She was conducted out of the little, half ruined parlour or kitchen, a few paces along the passage, and then a few steps up a rent and shaking staircase, into a mean sleeping-chamber, of which the door faced the passage: the stairs continuing to wind to the right, to the upper rooms of the house. As they passed into the chamber, it was with difficulty Peggy prevented herself from drawing back, when she perceived that the patched door had bolts and a padlock on the outside, but no fastening within. Still, however, she controlled her nerves, and displayed to her attendant no symptom of the apprehension that filled her bosom.

"I'm sorry the poor house doesn't afford a betther an' a handsomer lodgin' for you, Miss Peggy," said the woman, as both stumbled about the half-boarded floor of the room; "but you'll jest take the will for the deed; an' so, good bye, an' a pleasant night's sleep to you."

"Can't you oblige me with the candle?" asked Peggy, as her hostess was about to take it away.

"I would, with a heart an' a half, if it was to spare; but I'll have nothing else to light me to bed, an' help me to set things to rights for the morning; for the mather o' that, the good moon shines so bravely through the window, and I believe through another little place in the loft here, that you'll be well able to say your

prayers an' go to bed by it, Miss Peggy; so *bannochthlath!*" and she finally took the candle away, securing the door on the outside, and leaving Peggy standing in the middle of the filthy chamber.

The moon did, indeed, stream in upon the floor as well through the shattered window as, first, through a breach in the slates of the house-roof, and then down the broken boards of the room over head. Peggy looked round for her bed, and saw, in a corner, a miserable substitute for one, composed of straw laid on the floor, and covered with two blankets. There was no chair or table, and feeling herself weak, she cautiously picked her steps to the corner, and sat down on this cheerless couch.

The motive of her conduct hitherto had been to hide her feelings, so as to throw the people of the house off their guard, and eventually create for herself an opportunity to escape to the main road, and thence to the next cabin at hand. In furtherance of her project, she now begged of God to strengthen her heart, and keep her in a steady mind; and, after her zealous aspiration, Peggy continued to think of the best part to act. At once she resolved not to stir in her chamber, until the woman and the two men should seem to have retired to sleep—if, indeed, it was doomed that they were to do so without disturbing her. In case of a noise at her door, she determined to force her way through the crazy window, and, trusting herself to God, jump from it to the ground, which, she argued, could not be many feet under her, as Peggy had not forgotten to count the steps while she ascended from the earthen passage to her present situation. If, after long watching, she could feel pretty sure that no evil was intended to her during the night, still she planned to steal to the window, open it with as little noise as possible, drop from it and try to escape.

More than an hour might have passed, when she heard a noise, as if of two persons stumbling through the house; it came nearer, and two men, treading heavily and unevenly, entered a room next to hers, and only divided from her by a wooden partition, which here and there admitted the gleams of a light they

bore. Without any rustling, Peggy applied her eye to one of the chinks, and gained a full view of the scene within. She saw the person she so much dreaded, led by the pale young man towards a bed such as she occupied; the one overcome by intoxication; the other cool, collected, and observant. With much grumbling, and many half-growled oaths, the drunken fellow seemed to insist on doing something that the lad would not permit, and at length Peggy heard an allusion to herself.

"Go to sleep, Ned; you're fit for nothing else to-night; there's your bed, I tell you," said the young man, forcing him to it.

"I say, Master Phil, stoopid, I'll have one word with that wench before I close a winker," replied Ned; "that wench, I say—hic!—what I picked up on the road; and why the devil should I bring her here but to chat a bit with her? Your house isn't fit for much better, you know, Master Phil; and, —— my eyes but—"

"Lie down, you foolish baste," interrupted his companion, pushing him down on the straw.

"I'll stand none of that nonsense, neither," continued the ruffian, scrambling about; "and it's no use talking; I'll see her by ——; I'll see the wench as I brought to this —— house: and don't you go to tell me, now, as how it's all a hum, and that I brought no such body into it; I'm not so cut but I remember it: so fair-play, Master Phil; she must be accounted for: none of your old mother's tricks will do, now. I am not to be done, by ——; the wench shan't be served out in that way, however; and I'll see her, by ——; first and last, that's my word: hic!—I'll—hic!" and he lay senseless.

The pale young man watched him like a lynx, until, after some moments, his growling changed into a loud snore, and there was no doubt but he slept soundly. Then he stepped softly to him, knelt on one knee, took out of his breast a large pistol, thrust it under his own arm, and finally emptied his pockets of a purse and some crumpled papers. Arising, with continued

caution, he glanced over the latter close by the candle, and Peggy saw his features agitated. The next moment he stole out of the room, barred the door outside, and she heard his stealthy step, betrayed by the creaking boards, about to pass her chamber.

At this moment, however, another step,—Peggy supposed that of the woman,—met his from the lower part of the house, and both stopped just at her frail, though well-secured, door.

"Well?" questioned the woman, in a sharp whisper; "you pumped him? and soaked him? and touched the lining of his pockets? Did we guess right?"

"We did, by ——," answered the young man; "the ——— rascal has peached, by the ———; his very shuffling with me showed it at once; but here's the proof: here's an answer from Mr. Long to his offer to put him on his guard against the swag at Long Hall, this blessed night: and here's another letter, from Lonnon, closing with another offer of his to set the poor private for the Bow-street bull-dogs."

They had, during these words, been perhaps speaking to each other at some little distance; for their whispers, now that Peggy supposed them to have come close together, were lost on her aching ear, though she still heard the hissing sounds in which the conversation was carried on. A considerable time lapsed while they thus stood motionless outside her door: at length they moved; seemed about to part; and, at parting, a few more sentences became audible.

"Go, then," said the woman; "an' let us lose no time: nothing else can be done; poor Maggy is to be saved from the treachery of the Lonnon sneak, if there was no one else concarned in the case; speed, Phil; make sure o' the horn-hafted Lamprey that you'll find on the dresser: I'll meet you at his dour with a ligh and a vessel. Are you sure he sleeps sound enough?"

"There is only the one sleep more that can be sounder," replied Phil; and Peggy heard them going off.

In panting terror she listened for their steps again passing her door: nor had she to listen long. Slowly

and stealthily, and with heavy breathings, or a suppressed curse at the cracking boards, they separately came by. In a moment after, she heard them undo the fastenings of the inside room, and, fascinated to the coming horror, as the bird is to the reptile's glance, her eye was fixed to a chink, ere the light they carried afforded her a renewed view of the victim's chamber.

The woman first entered, bearing the candle in one hand, and in the other a basin which held a cloth. Her face was now set in the depth of the bad expression Peggy had seen it momentarily wear below stairs; and she was paler than usual, though not shaking or trembling. The lad followed, taking long and silent strides across the floor, while his knife gleamed in his hand, and his look was ghastly. They made signs to each other. The woman laid down the candle and the basin, and tucked up the sleeves of her gown beyond her elbows. She again took up her basin, laid the cloth on the floor, stole close to the straw couch, knelt by it, and held the vessel near the wretch's head. Her companion followed her, and knelt also. He unknotted and took off, with his left hand, the man's neck-cloth. As it was finally snatched rather briskly away, the wearer growled and moved. He never uttered a sound more.

Peggy kept her eye to the chink during the whole of this scene. She could not withdraw it. She was spell-bound; and, perhaps, an instinctive notion that if she made the slightest change in her first position, so as to cause the slightest rustle, her own life must be instantly sacrificed—perhaps this tended to hold her perfectly still. She witnessed, therefore, not only the details given, but the concluding details which cannot be given. Even when the murder was done, she durst not remove her eye until the woman and lad had left the chamber; so that she was compelled to observe the revolting circumstance of washing the blankets and the floor, and other things which again must not be noticed. It is certain that moral courage and presence of mind never won a great victory over the impulses of nature, than was shown in this true situation, by this lonely

and simple girl. Often, indeed, there arose in her bosom an almost irresistible inclination to cry out—at the moment the neckcloth was removed, when the sleeping man muttered and turned, she was scarcely able to keep in her breath; yet she *did* remain silent. Not even a loud breathing escaped her. All was over, and she a spectatress of all, and still she mastered herself; and although, so far as regarded her, the most home cause for agitation finally occurred as the murderers were about to withdraw, Peggy was a heroine to the last.

"He'll touch no blood-money now," whispered the woman; "an' we may go to our beds, Phil, for the work is done well; so, come away—but stop; high-hanging to me, if I ever thought of that young —— in the next room: an', for any thing we know, she may be watching us all this time."

"If you think so, mother, there's but one help for it," observed the lad.

"A body could peep through the chinks well enough," resumed the female monster;—"but, on a second thought, Phil, d'you thing it's in the nature of a simple young counthry girl like her to look at what was done, without givin' warning?"

"May be not; come, try if she's asleep any how; she can't bam us there, mother."

"Come."—And they left the chamber.

The moment they withdrew, Peggy stretched herself on her couch, threw a blanket over her person, closed her eyes, and breathed as if fast asleep. Yet it was with many doubts of her own ability to go successfully through this test, that she listened for the noise of unbarring her door. The creeping steps approached, and her heart nearly failed her. A bolt was shot, and her brain swam.

But again the assassins seemed to hesitate, and again she heard their whispers.

"Stop," said the lad, "she must be sound asleep, as you say; it's not to be thought she could look on and stand it."

"That's my own notion," replied the woman.

"Then if we rouse her, at this time o' night, wid those marks about us," meaning the marks on their hands and clothes, "why, it 'll be tellin' our own sacret, when we might hould our tongue."

"Yes; an' only makin' more o' the same work for ourselves, when we have done enough of it."

"Besides; she'll be to the fore in the mornin', and then we can cross-hackle her on the head of it; an', if she shows any signs of knowin' more than we want her to know,—why, it can be a good job still."

"You spake rason; an' sure enough, she'll be to the fore; because I have a notion o' my own, that we ought to keep her fast till the poor private an' Maggy sees her; they'll want to have a word wid her, may be: so, by hook or crook, she's to pass another day and night in the house."

"Let us go sleep, then, mother; an' you must get me a little wather."

"Yes, a-vich; but I don't think myself wants much o' the sleep for this night, any how."

They left Peggy's door, and she was thus saved the test her soul shrank from. In some time after their steps became silent; she lay on her straw, with clasped hands and eyes turned to Heaven, offering the most fervent thanks for her preservation. The winter morning broke; all seemed quiet in the house; and she ventured to sit up and think again. Her neighbourhood to the mangled body occurred to her, and delirium began to arise. She had recourse to her prayers for help and strength, and they did not fail her. Hour after hour passed away, still she kept herself employed, either by communions with her God, or by laying out her mind to meet the trials she had yet to encounter.

They would watch her, they had said, in the morning; she was able to will and determine that the investigation would be vain: Peggy felt that she could defeat them. They intended to induce or force her to spend the day and night where she was; against this plan she also attempted to lay a counter-plot.

It might be nine o'clock when she heard them stirring about. But, at the first sound, she lay stretched

on her bed; and this proved a good precaution. One of them walked softly up the stairs; then into the next room; and afterwards, close to the partition, by her couch; and, as Peggy judged by the hard breathing through the chinks, seemed to watch if she slept. She was now able to give every appearance of sleep to the eye of the observer. After a few moments, they were together in the room, and she heard their whispers, and then the noise of trailing out the body.

For about another hour, they left her undisturbed. At length the door was opened, and the woman entered her chamber. Peggy still pretended to sleep, showing, however, some signs of the restlessness that attends our being disturbed from sleep without our being fully aroused. The hideous visitor stooped down and stirred her. Peggy bore the touch of that hand on her shoulder, without wincing in any way. The woman stirred her again, and she seemed gradually and naturally to become awakened.

"Musha, it's the good sleep that's on you, a-colleen," said the woman, as she sat up.

"Yes, indeed; I'm not used to be without the sleep so long, and I had none before this since I left the mountains," answered Peggy. "Is it very late? but I don't care much about that, as there's no use in my starting from you till the coach comes again to-night, and gives me a seat for Dublin."

"We'll tell you all about that by and by: get up now, my woman, an' break your fast; you ought to be hungry."

"And I am very hungry, and able to help myself out of any thing you lay before me."

The woman led her down stairs. A good breakfast was prepared. Peggy seemed to eat with a keen appetite; but she contrived to slip the bread she had cut into her large country pockets. The young man entered: she bade him a smiling good-morrow. He hoped she had passed a good night: she answered promptly and easily.

"It's an odd question I'm for axin'," he continued, "but I thought I heard strange noises in a room next to yours last night—did *you*?"

With the consciousness that the eyes of both were watching her face for a change of expression, Peggy baffled the enquiry.

"It's said this ould house is haunted," rejoined the woman, "an' that's the ghost's room."

"My faith isn't strong in ghosts," said Peggy, smiling; "but I'm glad you did not tell of it before I went to bed, or I might be kept waking."

A pause ensued, during which she knew that her catechists were consulting each other by looks and nods.

"Why don't you ax afther your friend, that helped to bring you to us last night?" pursued the lad.

"I was thinking of him, but said to myself he was in his bed, maybe; and as he's no kith or kin o' mine, only a stranger met on the road, I didn't believe it would be right for a young, lone woman like me to be asking so closely after him."

"He's not in his bed," said the lad, fixing his eye. She stood his glance.

"No," resumed the woman; "but gone the road at the first light this mornin'."

"Why then I'm sorry for his going."

"How's that?" asked the lad.

"Because I'm left without a farthing in the world, and I thought that, as he looked to be a dacent man, maybe he'd lend me a few shillings to take me on to Dublin; and now I don't know what to do under Heaven."

"Never make yourself uneasy about that," remarked the hostess: "for if you thought he looked so like a dacent body, he thought you looked like a hansome colleen, as you are; an' for a token, hearin' o' your loss by the coach, he left us the very thing you're talking about, to give you when you'd get up."

"Yes, he left this wid me for you," pursued the other, handing some silver, "and just his word to take care an' have as much ready to pay him in the next place he an' you are to see ach other."

As he gave the money, and spoke these words very significantly, he again fixed his eye; but Peggy allowed him no advantage. With many professions of thanks to her chance benefactor, she quietly put up the sup-

posed gift. Perhaps they became fully assured that they had nothing to fear, for they soon stopped questioning her.

"I'll pay him, with hearty thanks, sure enough," she continued, recurring to the topic, "and sooner than he thinks, maybe. I have only to get to Dublin, to the Brazen-Head, where my father stops, when I'll have money enough; and, after a word there, I'm to pass your door, to-morrow, about the night-fall, when I'll be axin' a night's lodgin' from you again; and I can jest lave the honest man's shillings in your hands, and you'll give 'em to him, the next time he calls, in Peggy Nowlan's name, and her best wishes along with 'em."

The day wore away in common topics, and she showed no anxiety to depart. She said she grew hungry for her dinner; and, when it came before her, still seemed to make a hearty meal. No living creature came to the house during the day; but she could understand that the person called Maggy, and who she concluded was her wretched cousin, Maggy Nowlan, and the other person, called "the private," were expected during the night; as also a number of "the customers," from Dublin.

Nothing had yet been said to deter her from proceeding to town in the night-coach, which, as usual, was to pass at about three o'clock in the morning. She often alluded to its hour of passing by, and they did not make an observation. This gave her courage; and, after the night fell—for Peggy, still to avoid a shadow of suspicion, would not motion to stir in the day-light—she said, inadvertently, and yet with some natural show of anxiety to proceed in her interrupted journey:

"Maybe I couldn't get a seat in it, an' what should I do, then?—But maybe I ought to take the road some time afore ye expect it to come up, so that, when it overtakes me, if I get the place, well and good; and if I don't, why I could be so far on my way, and sure of walking the six or seven miles more, to Dublin, by the morning, any how; for I must be there in the morning: what brings me up is to get a good lot of money from

my father, that 'll be wanted at home the day after to-morrow, or the next day, at farthest; and so, ye see, honest people, I 'm beholding to be soon back and forward, and, as I said, sleeping in your house, on my way to the country, by to-morrow night, any how."

They said little in reply to this; but Peggy believed they again exchanged some glances and signs, while her head was purposely held down; and then they retired to whisper at the outward door. Fervently did she pray, although the prayer involved an uncharitable contradiction, that, influenced by the hope of plunder she had held out, their resolves not to let her depart for the night might be changed. And perhaps her plan took effect.

In a short time they rejoined her; and after a few ordinary remarks, said, by the way, that she might do well to "take a start o' the road, afore the coach, just as she was a saying of it; and they wished her safe to Dublin, any how; and they hoped she would keep her promise, and come see them on her way home again."

Without discovering any extraordinary joy at this concession, Peggy bid them a steady and cordial good-b'ye; engaged her bed for the next night; and it was not till the very moment she was crossing the murderous threshold that she feared her face, accent, and fluttered step might have given intimation of the smothered emotions that battled in her heart.

But, again befriended by her extraordinary presence of mind, she checked her rising ecstacy, and trod with a sober and way-faring step down the dark, tangled, and miry lane. When fairly launched on the broad road, her breast experienced great relief; yet still she kept her demure pace, neither faltering, nor looking back nor about her, nor yet sure of the policy of rushing into the first cabin she might meet. Her heart whispered that the people of the abominable house might have noticed her parting struggle, and, after a little reflection, would perhaps follow her, and put her to another trial.

To her left, as she walked along, was some rather high

ground, falling down to the road, little cultivated, and crowded with furze and briars. A straggling path ran through it, parallel to the road, but at some distance, and, she believed, led to the lone house in the "*bosheen.*" Her eye kept watching this path, every step she took. The moon shone full upon it, so as to enable her to discern any near object. Peggy, her head down, and her regards not visibly occupied, soon caught a figure rapidly striding along the path, through the clumps of furze and briars. As it abruptly turned towards a gap in the road-fence, some yards before her, she could ascertain that this individual was closely muffled in the common female Irish mantle, holding, as Irishwomen often do, the ample hood gathered round the face.

"That's not a woman's step," thought Peggy; as the figure issued through the gap:—"and now, this will be the sorest trial of all."

And, with her suspicions, well might she say so. The gigantic resolution of her heart, so long kept up, had just begun to yield to an admitted sense of relief: she had just permitted her mind to turn and sicken on the contemplation of the horrors she had witnessed and escaped; an opportunity at last seemed created for an indulgence of the revulsion and weakness of her woman's nature;—and now again to call back her unexcelled philosophy; again to rally herself; again to arrest and fix the melting resolution; to steady the pulse-throb, tutor the very breath, prepare the very tones of her voice; this, indeed, was her sorest trial. But it was her greatest too; for Peggy, assisted a little by the shadows of night, came out of it still triumphant.

"God save you!" began the person in the cloak, in a female voice. Peggy gave the usual response with a calm tone.

"Are you for thravellin' far, a-roon?" continued the new-comer. She said she was going to Dublin.

"I'm goin' there myself, an' we may's well be on the road together."

"With all my heart, then," answered Peggy, and they walked on side by side.

"You're not of these parts, ma-colleen, by your tongue," resumed her companion. Peggy assented.

"An' how far did you walk to-day, a-chorra?"

"Not far; not a step to-day; only from a house in a bosheen behind us, a few minutes ago."

"What house, a good girl? do you mane the ould slate-house that stands all alone, in the middle o' the lane?" Peggy believed that was the very one.

"Lord save us! what bad loock sent you there?"

"None, that I know of; why?"

"It has a bad name, as I hear among the neighbours, and 'ud be the last place myself 'ud face to, for the night's rest."

"Well, aroon; it's only a Christian turn to spake of people as we find 'em; I have nothing at all to say against the house; an' may be it won't be long till I see it again."

"That's bould as well as hearty of a young girl like y ou. Did you come across the woman o' the house?"

"Yes; and met good treatment from her; the good tey; the good dinner; every thing of the best."

"But what kind of a bed did you get from her, a-hager?" continued the catechist, speaking very low, sidling to Peggy, and grasping her arm. This threw her off her guard. She shrieked and broke from her companion, who, as she ran, fast pursued her; and the person's real voice at last sounded in her ear.

"Stop, Peggy Nowlan, or rue it! I know what you think of the bed you got now!"

The road suddenly turned in an angle; Peggy shot round the turn: as her pursuer gained on her, she heard the noise of feet approaching in a quick tramp, and a guard of armed soldiers, headed by two men in civil dress, and followed by a post-chaise, met her eyes at a short distance; she cried out again, and darted among the soldiers; one of them caught and held her from falling, and she had only time to say—"Lay hands on the murderer!" when nature at last failed, and Peggy's senses left her.

CHAPTER III.

She recovered to a sense of rapid motion, and found herself in a post-chaise sitting beside a soldier, whose features, in the yet unbroken darkness of the winter's morning, were hidden from her. To her incoherent and timid questions her new companion spoke mildly, and in a voice that was very pleasing to her ear. She had nothing to apprehend, he said. A gentleman who followed the military party in the post-chaise, recognised her after she had swooned away; and as soon as the man, disguised in female attire, to whom she directed their notice, had been secured, he prevailed on the sergeant of the little detachment to allow her an escort to Dublin, and get her forwarded to a hotel in Sackville-street, where he would soon join her.

Peggy was as much astonished as pleased at this information. Who could her self-elected guardian be? What right had he, whoever he was, to give orders about her? and ought she to submit to those orders? would it seem proper for a young woman like her to go passively to the hotel of a gentleman of whom she knew nothing, and there await his return?

She asked the civil soldier to tell her the name of this person. The man had never heard it. All he knew of him was that he had called at Richmond Barracks, which place lay on her present way to Dublin, very early that morning, accompanied by a police-officer and a country-looking man, for the purpose of summoning a serjeant's guard, to aid him in the apprehension of certain people who lived a little way on from the spot where they had found Peggy.

"That's the ould house in the bosheen," she thought, "and nothing else it is."

"But what like gentleman was it that came in the post-chaise?"

The soldier could not even on this point give her any information. The serjeant only, of all the party, had spoken with the gentleman, and had an opportunity of closely observing him. For his own part, he

did not know any thing about him. He would not venture to describe even his height or age.

Still Peggy wondered, and, amid all her troubles and exhaustion, taxed herself to think. In a few moments she resolved, if possible, not to go to the hotel whither the gentleman had requested her to be conveyed, and, encouraged by the very soothing manner of her companion, said she had the most pressing business at another inn, the Old Brazen Head, and would thank him to bring her there. The soldier replied that he was not at liberty to conduct her, himself, to one place or the other; he could not see her even quite into town; in fact, his orders were to drop her at Richmond Barracks, and there engage some other person to walk forward with her, while he immediately returned in the post-chaise to the spot on which his services might be required. But he engaged to enforce on the person that might take her on into town, the necessity of attending to all her wishes.

With this promise, they arrived before the entrance gate of Richmond Barracks. The attentive soldier got out; and "Here, sentinel," he said, addressing the man on guard, as he helped Peggy down, "Sergeant Goodge sends orders that you give this young woman in charge to the first man at hand; she is much terrified, a stranger in town, and quite alone; let her have a safe guide wherever it is her pleasure to go; to the Brazen Head, she says: and harkye," in a low tone, "she's a respectable person, and must be treated as such."

"The orders shall be cared for," said the sentinel, a staid man of middle age, who seemed to regard the thing only as a part of his military duty.

"Then, good-b'ye, young woman," continued her conductor: "I must be back again in the chase as fast as the wheels can turn; and I say, my dear," in a mild, earnest tone, "if your face is pretty, as I suppose it is, just keep it as well hidden, until you get to your quarters, from every other person you may meet, as you have from me; good-b'ye."

As he was about to re-enter the chaise, a country-

dressed man got down from the driver's seat: and the soldier asked, "Hallo, who are you?"

"A boy from the bogs," he answered, in a voice of mixed shrewdness and carelessness; "a boy from the bogs, just come on the masther's business to town; sure you seen me maybe wid him, on the road, when the colleen stopt us, Sir."

"Oh, I half remember you; do you stay behind, now?"

"If it's the same to you, I'd rather o' the two."

"I have no concern in the matter; on, driver, as quick as you can;" and the chaise whirled off at a rapid rate, in the direction it had come.

"What curiosity ye all have in ye," muttered "the boy from the bogs," as it whisked away.

"Ah, Tims," said the sentinel, addressing a man in a soldier's watch-coat, who that moment came, with a quick step, up to the gate—"is that you, lad? returned from furlough so soon?"

"Yes; returned this moment."

"As you go in, tell Corporal White that here's a young woman to go under escort to the Brazen Head Inn, by order of Sergeant Goodge."

"As I shan't be wanted in Barracks till parade hour, why I'll take her in charge myself."

"Well, do so: and be careful of her; none of your old tricks, mind; the orders are that she is a respectable young woman, d'ye hear, and to be treated accordingly:—this good fellow will see you to your quarters, young woman," he added, addressing Peggy, who had held back during the arrangement, carefully covering her head with a large shawl, to avoid the chill blast, as well as to escape observation; for we cannot say but that the hypothesis upon which her first conductor had given his parting advice might be partially admitted by Peggy, prim and humble as she was.

"To the Brazen Head, my girl?" asked her new guide, offering his arm.

"Yes, sir," she answered, timidly, and, at his request, still more timidly giving her arm: they moved on together.

"It's a thing I often hard," soliloquized "the boy from the bogs," as he walked in their train, but sufficiently distant to be unseen in the darkness, which, notwithstanding that it fast approached to six o'clock, still fully prevailed—"It's a thing I often hard said, that them sodgers is all born divils; an' when there's purty cratures in the way, no such thing as puttin' thrust in 'em; so, we'll keep lookin' on, by the way we didn't see, though our eyes won't be shet abit."

Unwillingly, yet cautious of showing distrust, Peggy, without once lifting up her face, had taken her companion's arm. Although feeling a repugnance to so close an intimacy with a strange soldier, her conduct on this occasion was measured, too, by her country standard of behaviour, according to which she might innocently give her arm, at a late hour, on a lonesome road, to one of her father's workmen; no consciousness existing, on either side, of any thing beyond the real service required and afforded. She further judged, with her usual prudence, that the man was accountable for her safe conduct; for she had heard delivered the orders respecting her; and she knew enough of a soldier's duty to conclude that they must be strictly observed.

But they had proceeded only a short distance on their way, when, in passing by a brilliant lamp, that shone vividly upon them, the soldier stopped short, and in a jocular tone said—"Let's see your face, my woman." At the same time he touched the shawl that Peggy kept folded over her little bonnet, close down to her chin; and she, not speaking a word, still held it tight, bent her head, and tried to avoid his scrutiny.

"God save ye kindly," said their hitherto unseen observer, coming indistinctly into view, while he changed his voice, with much skill, and put on a foolish look.

"Eh! what does he say?" asked the soldier.

"Nothin' of any harm; only God save ye."

"Well, and what do you want, Master Pat?"

"Jack, i' you plase; Jack Lanigan, Sir, is the name o' me."

"But have you any business with us!"

"It isn't a grate dale, Sir," dropping his jaw much lower, as with (to use his own word) "a *moryh** humility" he took the front part of the leaf of his hat between his finger and thumb, in manner of salute, and so held it while he spoke; "maybe, for a good-will you'd have towards me, you'd tell us where one Molly Houlihan stops: she's wid a misthress Taffy; a snug woman I hear; an' Molly is all-in-all 'wid her."

There really was such a woman as Molly Houlihan, a "gossip" to the speaker; but he chose to bring in her name here, only, in a certain strain, to support a character. Molly had once been his neighbour, the wife of a small farmer; his god-mother, too; had become "broke, horse an' foot,"—literally understood to mean "ruined, in every shape and way;" had gone to England with her son, to reap and bind; on their return, when the son got married, had settled in Dublin, and was now "a basket," a basket-woman, or a porter to a respectable stall-vender of fish, in Pill-lane, the Dublin Billingsgate.

The soldier laughed at the man's request.

"Avoch, you're welcome to your laugh; only if you war could an' hungry, an' a poor sthray man, goin' the road among the hills this mornin', an' axin me, Jack Lanigan, where's the place my gossip lives, Jack Lanigan 'ud make you laugh, to rise your heart, sooner nor put the laugh on you, any how."

"As you seem to say you're hungry, there's a trifle for you;" throwing a penny in the direction where, without being more than half visible, his new acquaintance stood: "further, I do not well understand you."

He went to pick up the largess, and the soldier again addressed Peggy, pleading to see her face. While searching about, the man continued to keep his eye upon them. Peggy still resisted her guide's importunity; the contest arose to something like a strug-

* Pretended humility.

gle; and her shawl and bonnet at last fell off, leaving her features fully exposed in the light of the lamp. Peggy could now only cast down her eyes; the soldier peered close; but, instead of seeming pleased with the view of the very comely face thus presented, he started back, as if he had seen a spectre.

The countryman had picked up the shawl and bonnet; and now, as the soldier stept back, he stept closer with them to Peggy: affecting, all the while, with his head bent, and his hat pulled over his eyes, to rub the dirt from them. We may, without any breach of the confidence existing between this person and ourselves, tell the reader that all his manœuvring of a closer advance, and a little delay, arose from a wish to look into the soldier's face without showing his own; and this curiosity again arose out of a suspicion, just come into his mind, that, notwithstanding the disguise of the high standing collar of his watch-coat, the individual might be a certain person with whom he was formerly acquainted. Acting in furtherance of his view, he accordingly kept rubbing and blowing at the shawl and bonnet, as Peggy stood uncovered, and stretched out her hand for them; and glancing stealthily, now and then, towards her guide as he said—"Have a little patience, a-lanna; "I'll put the worth iv his penny upon them, in a cleanin'; we war never a boy, though we cum from the bogs themselves, that 'ud beg or take a thing widout givin' something for it;" and, as the soldier still drew back into the shade of the wall, he moved sideways after him.

It was in consequence of this wilful delay, that Peggy yet stood uncovered and undisguised, under the strong glare of the lamp, as a night-coach rattled up, from the country, on its way to the post-office. A young woman was leaning from the window, either in vague hopes of recognising some friend at every moment, or impelled by curiosity to observe as much of the metropolis as could be seen by lamp-light. She screamed to the coachman to stop; and while the soldier, attracted by her scream, started at her appearance, in another moment Anty Nowlan was in her sister's arms.

"Is our eye-sighth good?" queried "the boy from the bogs;" "wait—it's the other, sure enough. What the duoul—God forgive me!—brings 'em both here? For the matther o' that, what's the raison the one or the t'other 'ud be runnin' from their quiet home, where there's pace an' plenty of all sorts? Well, I'll have a purty job on my hands; lookin' afther one wasn't enough, but there must be a couple to keep out o' harm's way."

They were yet clinging to each other when the guard cried out that the time was passing, and he must start. They did not hear him; he sounded his despotic horn. Anty, shaken by her journey, and now by her emotion, became ill. He questioned Peggy as to her sister's ability to get in: Peggy did not know what to do or say, but even if Anty was lifted into the coach, it struck her as a better resource than remaining under the protection of the soldier: she had, however, to put on her own bonnet and shawl, which her unknown squire yet held; and as, in her confusion and distress, she did not reply to the guard's last question, the door was clapped to; the man of capes and handkerchiefs began to climb up to his seat: she heard him cry "All right;" the impetuous vehicle rattled away; she screamed after it; was not heard or heeded; and she and her young sister were left together, in the dark winter's morning, upon the immediate thoroughfare into a great city, not knowing where to turn, but luckily ignorant, at the same time, of the full extent of the danger and impropriety of such a situation. And could she have witnessed the conversation that immediately ensued in the coach, Peggy would not have been cheered by hearing a good lady tell a fellow-traveller that, "all along, she had no good opinion of the young jade that just left them; that it was a mighty umproper sort of thing to take up such runners-by-night, when a dacent person couldn't guess who was coming: and *you* see, honey," she added, in a tone of great good-nature and compassion, "the sort she must be of, when she darts out, in the dark, to make hail-fellow-well-met with a common sthreet-walker, for-

nent Richmond Barracks"—all the while that, as she spoke, the young lady to whom she addressed herself might, if it was lightsome enough, have discerned the arm of this charitable person closely circumscribing the waist of her next neighbour, a burly and gallant country merchant, going up to purchase goods.

"Excuse my awkwardness, young woman," resumed the soldier, after the coach had driven off, advancing from the shade, more closely muffled than before, while Peggy drew back from him in resentment and apprehension: "excuse my awkwardness; it was a soldier's little freedom, nothing more. I'm sorry for it now; and promise, on the word of a soldier, I'll not repeat it, but conduct you and your sister to the place you seek, and which I know very well."

"Thank you, Sir; but we'll try to find it without assistance: come Anty," taking her hand.

"You'll never be able to get on; be sure of that; and, at such an hour, the streets are particularly dangerous, and full of bad people."

"Indeed, and I fear so," hesitated Peggy.

"Besides, young woman, I must give an account of you to my superiors; I have you in charge, and can't part you till you are safe."

"God, of his mercy, direct us for the best!" said Peggy; "for," she continued, turning to him, while tears ran down her cheeks, "we are quite strangers in Dublin; come up after our father, who is ill—dying, I believe—at the Brazen Head; so, Heaven be your reward, and bring us to him."

"Never fear me," he answered, "you shall soon see your father;" and again he softly drew Peggy's arm within his, and would have done the same by Anty, but, although she entirely committed herself to Peggy's arrangement, the sensitive girl shrank, trembling, from him, and took her way and kept her place by her sister's side.

"I'm a duoul's fool, to be sure, again soliloquized "the boy from the bogs," as he again cautiously followed in their wake: "they say so, in the counthry,

"If it's a thing you don't like," answered the other, his face settling in determination, say 'God be wid you, boy!' an' jest run while you have the use o' the two legs. Whoo, bother," as his armed foe still advanced, "here we are agin, then, like a May-boy."

He resolutely darted forward, flourishing his cudgel about his head and before his person, with such dexterous rapidity as to make its circular motion resemble that of a chariot-wheel, in full speed. The bayonet flew some yards from the soldier's hand.

"Down on your cursed marrow bones, now," pursued the victor, collaring him, "what you didn't do these thousand years—down on your hunkers, I say! or, by the soul o' man, I'll whip the head o' your showlders as clane as ever I cut a handful o' barley: kneel down, I bid you! forcing him to his knees, "put up your two hands, and ax their pardon: spake!" drawing the hooked blade of a large country *couteau*, within a hair's breadth of his throat.

"Well, I do ask their pardon."

"An' God's pardon?" making another movement of the blade.

"Yes;" grumbled the half-choked man.

"An' mine?"

"And yours."

"Very well: get up, now;" giving him a shove that set him sprawling—"get up, now, an' go practice at your tar-gate."

"Just let me have my bayonet;" walking towards it.

"Call to-morrow, a-vich," snatching it up:—"make off wid yoursef—go to the duoul, where you're thravellin' day an' night—run out of the one road wid me—cut your stick—manin' to say, take yoursef out o' my sighth!" During these separate exhortations, the conqueror, holding the bayonet in his left hand, and incessantly flourishing the good cudgel with his right, gradually worked himself into a mad caper round and round the soldier; and—"whoo;" he continued, intently watching the wonders of his own feet—"whoo! you say you have a knowledge o' me—an' so you have

—(duoul thank you)—to your cost—whoo! here's the boy that's not ashamed o' what they christened him—" and thereupon he yielded his usual stave, only varying one word, by way of present compliment—

"My name it's Conolly the rake,
I don't care a sthraw for any man;
I dhrinks good whishkey an' ale,
An' I'd bate out the brains of a sodger man,—
Whoo!"

The battle between Peery and his antagonist had continued but a very short period, during which the sisters looked on in trembling anxiety, fearful to risk further peril, by a flight they knew not whither; now, their recognition of Peery, as he threw off his feigned voice and character, and most convincingly proclaimed his own name, gave them, in the first instance, great relief; and with a "Thank God!" they pressed each other's hands, and awaited his leisure to return to them.

"Scoundrel, I'll reckon with you for all this," muttered the soldier, about to withdraw.

"Aha!" cried Peery, suddenly stopping his buffoonery, and changing into a wild yet stern vigour, as he again darted at the man's throat—"an' I a'most forgot to make my eye-sight sure o' you—show us your face, a-bouchal—" in a voice sufficiently low to be lost to the sisters—"yes—it's your ownsef—but I won't be the man to hould you here:—we know where you're to be had for the axin'. I'll jest lave you to them that gets their bread by ketchin' rogues o' your sort—only be off, I say, out o' sighth an' hearin' of her that one look from you 'ud kill an' murther!—there—go your ways—" And the soldier ran down a lane, and diappeared.

"An' come now, my poor sowls o' girls; come wid me; an' let us go the wide world, wherever we like, our ownsefs."

"Are you hurt, Peery, my poor boy?" asked Peggy, kindly.

"Sorrow as much as a scratch, Miss Peggy, an', for

a rason I know, that you won't tell any body that 'ud be axin you—maybe it's not the first time we made a fool o' the bagnet. Wait abit, an' let us put it up; there, now;" slinging it with a piece of cord at his back, in the way his compatriots sling their sickles, or, as they call them, "rapiin'-hooks," when they issue forth, over land and sea, in quest of harvest work—"that's snug; an' when a handy smith bates it out a little, an' makes it crooked, an' puts teeth into its head, it 'ill save the price iv a hook for the next sason, I'm thinkin';—so, come: sure I know where you want to go, my pet."

"Then you know the way to the Brazen-Head?" asked Peggy.

"Know the way? to be sure I——stop; now that I think of it, bad manners to me if I do. But sure I know what you want there; poor Daniel, the father, is sick, an' ye can't make him off; so here's to set out on the road, any how: though, what way," in a low tone to himself, "Peery Conolly no more knows, nor if he war a gorçoon o' two months ould."

While he thus half soliloquized, (a habit to which he was much addicted, and which gave one of the reasons why he was regarded, "in his own part o' the counthry," as "not right in his mind," it being a prevalent opinion that all deranged persons talked as much to themselves as to others)—while thus employed, he was, in turn, closely observed by an individual, who, if dress and personal conformation did not deceive, might have been half masculine, half feminine. She, however, laid claim to the honour of being one of the softer sex. She was broad built as a Dublin coalheaver: she wore a man's coat, buttoned close to the chin, a man's hat, pressed flat in the crown, and forced over a mob-cap, for she would assert female attire; and from the knees downward, a clumsily gathered linsey-woolsey petticoat more decidedly intimated her pretensions. Under the hat and cap appeared a red, weather-beaten, rough-featured face. A flat, shallow basket was tucked under her arm; and about an inch of a black pipe was held between her teeth.

"Whisht," said this questionable person to herself, as she came to a dead stop; "isn't that Peery Conolly from Tipperary? My sowl to glory but it's very like him in the back."

"Then you do not know the way, Peery?" resumed Peggy, in evident distress, and perhaps giving some scope to a dread even of her defender, as old recollections came to her mind, and she found herself completely in his power.

"I jist know as much about it, as if we dropped from the clouds, out, this moment: but if we could come on the road to Molly Houlihan, that stops wid a Misthress Taffy, a snug woman, in Pill Lane, she'd bring us to it, no doubt."

"It's his ownsef," resumed the person alluded to, now much nearer to him than he thought of; "an' he's talkin' o' me, the poor boy."

"But never mind id, Miss Peggy an' Miss Anty, a-lanna; the mornin' 'ill soon be shinin' out, as well as it can, in this place, an' for the time o' the year that's in id; an' sure we have tongues in our heads: don't be a bit afeard; there's neither hurt nor harum, shame nor shkandle, 'ill come next or near ye, while Peery's four bones hould together."

"Wait now," continued Molly, "until I take a shtart out iv him."

She hastily put up her black pipe-stump; wiped her mouth with the sleeve of her man's coat; caught her flat basket with both hands; raised it aloft; and having stept softly after Peery, as he turned his back and talked on, complimented his shoulders with such a crash of the wickerwork as made him shout aloud—thus greeting him, during her salute—"Musha bad end to you, for one Peery Conolly; an' is id there you are, this mornin'?"

"Where's the sprong?" cried Peery, unslinging the bayonet, and wheeling round; but looking closer, he soon changed his manner; and contenting himself with an open-handed, long drawn "dowce," across the side of her head, affectionately piped out—"Arragh, Molly, how's every inch o' you?"

"Brave an' hearty, gossip;—an' so, here I find you?"

"My mother's son;" and the minor love-salutes took place.

"Who's them by the side o' you, Peery?" glancing suspiciously with the air of a woman of untainted virtue, at the two girls, who shrank back from her in some terror.

"Whisht, it's a shame for you, Molly, so it is; I'll tell you who they are; an' you're jist in time to lend a helpin' hand."

"Why, what concarn would I have wid such as them, why?"

"Bother, Molly, I'll show you the ups an' downs iv id."

Every thing now created suspicion in the breasts of the two poor girls. It appeared to Anty that some further mischief was intended, she became again ill, and sank suddenly in Peggy's arms.

"Is that id?" resumed Molly, interrupting and breaking away from Peery's story, and galloping to them; "musha, musha, my poor childher—och, murther, here's one o' them, all as one as stone-dead!"

"Molly, a sthore," whined Peery, "jist put an arum around her, I'm shy to do id."

"Oh, if you have Christian hearts, help us!" cried Peggy, "we are strangers here, without money or friends; our father is dying or dead, in Dublin, we don't know where, and we can't find him; give my little sister a help, and God will reward you."

"I'll tell you what, a-vourneen," answered Molly, "I lives hard by in a dacent cellar; jist come home wid us, you an' your darlin' little sisther, stop till the broad day wid poor Molly Houlihan, an' if she war to pop the last o' the duds on her back" (no great promise, however) "ye must have the good bed an' somethin' to rise your hearts, an' all wid the cead mille phaltea, as we used to say among the poor hills—"

"Yes, a-graw," urged Peery, "an' sorrow's the sowl but Molly 'ill come fornent you—"

"Yes, an' whin the christhens are all up an' kickin',

an' when the little girl is as well as ever, sure we'll make off the ould daddy for you, dead or alive, if he's to be had in Dublin town; come, *a-chorra-ma-chree;*" seizing Anty.

"Well," said Peggy, still hesitating, "I'll take your kind offer, but, for the love of God, do not deceive us! If you are not a proper woman, if you do not mean us well—listen to me: there's no wish in my heart to vex you, I'm sorry if I have; but 'tis all the terror! We have already suffered so much and by such people! Good, blessed woman, take pity on us! do not bring us to harm! on my two bare knees I pray to you—let us lie down here in the streets, any where, any thing, sooner than that—for we are honest people's children, and we abhor a sin."

"The short an' the long is, a-vourneen, I see somebody very like the sodger comin' back, wid his faction to help him, so make the best o' your way at once wid Molly," said Peery, as, looking down the street, he fastened the bayonet on the stick.

Peggy started up from her knees and called to Molly to come away: "I trust you, I do indeed," she added, "I put Anty into your hands; come, I'll help you to bear her off."

"Come then, my darlins; decaive you?"

"Whisht, Molly, that's all bother, you know," remonstrated Peery; "if there's a human crature can look on *them*, an' mane them wrong at the same time, my curse, an' the curse o' Saint Pathrick, an' their own mother's curse on their heads, that's all. Run, my darlins, they see us!"

"Quick, quick!" cried Peggy; but she stopped an instant to say—"Woman! God so do to you and yours, as you do to us!"

"Wid all my heart!" answered Molly, and between them they hurried away with Anty, leaving Peery to brave the rallied anger of the person he had treated so unceremoniously a few minutes before, and who now came back, indeed, as he suspected, attended by a group of ruffianly fellows in ordinary costume.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY upon the morning after Anty's sudden departure from home, David Shearman, having returned to his father's sooner than he expected, walked over to visit Peggy. He found Cauth Flannigan in a state of the greatest terror and consternation. Her story was that the house had been broken into during the night, and robbed of all the money in it, and of her "young misthress, Miss Anty," too; for, unaware of the previous presence of the guest whom Anty had secreted, the poor girl could suppose nothing else, when, getting up at her usual hour, she found the desk open, and Anty gone. To his repeated questions, David Shearman then, for the first time, learned that Peggy was also from home, and Daniel Nowlan before her; and the young man stood stupified with horror and alarm, not knowing what to do, when Mr. Long's confidential steward entered the house, and stunned him by telling another strange story.

Some days before, the man said, his master had received, from a person who formed one of the gang, private information that Long Hall was to be plundered on a particular night, and its proprietor deprived of life. The informer wrote his letter first in the hopes of reward, next with a clause for self-preservation. He stipulated that, if Mr. Long would pledge his honour to give him a thousand pounds and a promise of pardon, he would enable him to save property and life, and to detect the plotters. Mr. Long acceded by letter to his terms, and the man, no longer disguising his name, which was Studs, wrote back another line, appointing a meeting with Mr. Long, in Dublin, from the neighbourhood of which city, he said, the gang were to go down to the country.

Mr. Long accordingly went to Dublin in great privacy, arranging to write back to his steward the necessary advices; and that confidential servant soon got from him a notice of the night when the house was to be attacked, with other particulars. The gang were

consist of four; one a woman of the name of Maggy Nowlan, whom Mr. Long and the steward knew; two men from Dublin, whom Studs also named; and a fourth man, a soldier, whom he would not further describe, but, he added, whom Mr. Long would recognize when they met face to face. After the receipt of this letter, the steward set about taking the measures previously agreed on between him and the writer, and which it again enforced. With the utmost secrecy, a party of military were obtained from Nenagh, and concealed in the house; and a man who, before Mr. Long left the country, had, the steward believed, intimated some further knowledge of the plot, and particularly of the identity of the soldier whom Studs declined to name, went off to join Mr. Long in Dublin. This person young Mr. Shearman well knew; Peery Conolly. And now came the end of the story. The appointed night arrived. Some of the soldiers were stationed in the house; some out of sight around it. The lights were extinguished; and when every thing gave signs of repose, the robbers were punctually heard making way through a lower window. Having been allowed to gain the inside of the house, and to commence their plundering, little exertion was necessary in apprehending them. But the woman and the two Dublin thieves alone appeared. The mysterious soldier had not at all come in view. When closely questioned about him, the prisoners would give no answer, except that he had spent part of the night in Daniel Nowlan's house; and it was this hint that sent over the steward the night before, when he met Anty on the road, and that also caused the present meeting between him and David Shearman.

When applied to on the subject then and now, poor Cauth warmly resisted, of course, such a base insinuation; and the sole new information she could supply only served farther to perplex the zealous steward. What was best to be done none of them could conjecture; what steps the steward was to take for securing this unknown person, or David to discover his Peggy and her sister, or Cauth to get every body back, and to keep the life in "her poor ould misthress of all,"

who lay at death's door, stunned and terrified by what she heard, and only able to scream aloud or scold her attendant.

At length, guided by Cauth's mentioning the Brazen Head, in Dublin, as the place to which, no doubt, Peggy had gone after her father, David formed his resolution. He ran home for his best horse. As he got into the saddle, his father's information, previously supplied to Peggy, but which he had not before received, made him sure that all would be right; and hastily shaking hands with his amazed parent, he galloped off along the Dublin road, determined to take fresh horses whenever he could find them, and not stop, night or day, until he should reach the metropolis. And accordingly, some hours before the sisters entered Dublin, David had gained it. He knew the old Brazen Head in Bridge street very well: it was a great resort for honest country-folk, from every part of Ireland: and he had once or twice before experienced its quiet, old-fashioned accommodation. In a short time, therefore, he was thundering at its massive door; nor had he to thunder long. "Boots" was up, as in duty bound, to welcome such travellers as might arrive by the six o'clock coaches from country parts, and who, at such an hour, in the depths of winter, could scarce expect the homage of a more sprightly attendant of the other sex.

"Was there a Mr. Nowlan in the house?" David asked, as soon as the half-alive, pallid creature appeared, with an inch of candle in his hand. "Yes, there was." "An old gentleman?" "Yes." "From the country?" "Yes, indeed." "Had he been ill?" "He had, but was better, and walking about now." "Was there a young lady with him—his daughter?" "No." "No?" "No, in troth; not a living soul belonging to him, man, woman, or child." David wrung his hands and stamped about. Peggy ought to have been in Dublin since that hour the previous morning. What had become of her? He asked the number of Daniel Nowlan's room; rushed up stairs; awoke the old man; and, with little precaution, told him of Peggy's departure

to seek him, two nights before, and of the sudden and unaccountable disappearance of Anty on the night following.

Daniel Nowlan, weak and exhausted as he was, fainted at the tidings. When restored to his senses, his grief was so childish, that it reminded David of the necessity to master his own passion, and summon up his strength of mind. He feared the old man's relapse into the sickness from which he had just recovered; and to send for medical assistance was his first proceeding. But when the physician arrived, his fears became removed; and after Daniel Nowlan took some quieting medicine, his young friend prevailed on him to have hope, and bend his thoughts to consider what was best to be attempted.

Before they proceeded to the urgent matter in hand, however, David ascertained that all attempts to find out the sailor who had called himself John Nowlan, had hitherto proved abortive. Then they partook of a hasty and scarce needful breakfast; and when it was broad daylight, got into a hackney coach, and drove to the office of the Lime[illegible] mail, in Dawson-street.

Immediate, though still torturing information here awaited them. They learned that the coach in which Peggy had come up, had broken down near Dublin; that she had been overlooked in the confusion, and not since heard of; and the guard of the other coach, which had conveyed Anty from the country, further supplied an account of the meeting between the sisters, near Richmond Barracks, and of their having been left, seemingly under the protection of a soldier, before the gate. To Richmond Barracks David and Daniel next repaired. The sentinel who had been on duty at the time in question, confirmed the account of the guard, adding that they had walked on into town with the soldier spoken of, and whose name was Tims.

Upon this, David proposed that he and the old man should part, and go separately into every public house on their way towards town, and afterwards meet at a police office, of which he inquired the situation and address, and gave both to Daniel. His advice

seemed good; it was acceded to by the father, and they parted.

With a flushed cheek, parched lips, streaming eyes, and his white hair flying neglected from under his broad-brimmed, country-farmer hat, Daniel Nowlan went into many public houses, asking vague and abrupt questions about his children, which some answered with concern, some with indifference, some with ridicule, and all without satisfaction to him. Wherever he met a soldier in the street, to him he particularly and most earnestly directed his inquiries; still uselessly, however: until, after walking a good way down Thomas street, two others, whom, as they stood talking on the flag-way, he suddenly addressed, seemed peculiarly moved by his questions.

But as we now turn upon the pivot of our history, it will be needful, with the reader's indulgence, to preface the interview between Daniel Nowlan and these two soldiers, with some conversation that passed between themselves before he came up.

They had accidentally m[illegible] in mutual agitation, though of different kinds. [illegible]e, who was unarmed, almost ran along the street, his face inflamed by half-suppressed rage, and his eyes often cast behind, as if to note whether or no he was pursued. The other also moved, in an opposite direction, at a very quick pace, and his features were also disturbed, but it would seem rather with anxiety and terror than with anger. So much were both absorbed, and so rapid their motion, that they had nearly jostled against each other ere a recognition took place. Then they stared for some seconds in silence, like old friends met to enter upon a business that must break their friendship for ever.

"I was looking for you, Frank," began the soldier whose feelings appeared to be those of great anxiety.

"Hush!" he was answered in a whisper, "how often have you promised to sink that name?"

"Tell me in one word," continued his comrade, gasping—"what have you done with the young woman given into your care at the Barrack-gate this morning? That you are the man I have been informed, by the sentinel in whose charge I left her."

"Brought her where she wanted to go, to be sure; you'll find her at the Brazen Head: good-b'ye. I have some business in hand."

"Stop, Sir; I don't believe your story."

"Indeed? and why so?" recovering his habitual self-possession.

"Did you know who she was?" demanded the other slowly, as he fixed a look on Frank.

"No; how the devil could I?—'twas pitch-dark, and her head so muffled up; and I in no humour for a frolic; I know nothing at all about her."

"I don't believe you again, Sir."

"You don't, don't you? let me pass, I say."

"A word first, listen well to me. When, after nearly two years of suffering and sorrow, I met you in the Indies, the very day you took the king's bounty and entered the same regiment with me, you told me *this* of home. You said your uncle had turned you out for marrying Peggy Nowlan; that your father would not receive you; that Peggy herself was unkind and ungrateful to you; that you had no means of earning a shilling for her or yourself; that, in fact, you were starving; that, forced to the last resource, you embarked for the chances of the patriotic struggle in South America; and failing in that, worked your way to where I met you, and were then glad to enlist as a private soldier."

"Ay; well?"

"Listen, I say. After leaving the young woman at the Barrack-gate this morning, only a few hours ago, do you know where I went, and on what kind of duty?"

"No; I had but just walked up to the gate, returning from furlough,—was not in the barracks when you were first called out, and, until I went into town with the girl, heard nothing of the matter."

"Well; so far I trust you. Did you see your uncle on furlough, Frank, and throw yourself on your knees to him, as you said you would? But, no matter for your answer. Hear me on. Hear on what duty I went out of Dublin, with the sergeant's guard, this

morning. We went, led by a peace-officer, and that very uncle, Frank."

"Damnation!" interrupted the hearer, thrown off his guard, and starting back.

"By that very uncle, to take into custody two old friends of yours, in the lone house, about fifteen miles from town."

"Whom do you mean? *Did* you take them?

"They are now in Kilmainham jail, charged as accomplices before the fact in a robbery at Long Hall, the night before the last; so that, while Maggy lies in Nenagh prison, along with her two companions, on the spot, we have here secured her wretched mother and brother—"

"I thought as much, by ——! I knew when that scoundrel turned back, almost at the first stage, it was to peach!—it's all out now! no use of bamming you any longer—help me to cut off, that's all; I'm in your hands. Tell me—has Studs blabbed of me to my uncle?"

"No. He declined at first to mention your name, and this morning it was out of his power to do so. Carey and her son had murdered him."

"Say you so? the best of their good deeds, by ——! They found out the villain's treachery of course. Where did it happen?"

"We found the body in a coal-hole in their house."

"Well, good-b'ye, there's but a run for it: will my uncle prosecute me?"

"Stop, I charge you again, but not on that account. In the horror and revulsion of my heart I leave you to your God for that: and fear nothing from your uncle, he does not yet know who the soldier is that Studs refused to name. I alone, Frank, exclusive of your infernal accomplices, guess you to be the man; because I know you went on furlough to the country. And that brings me to my own point—"

"How did you hear all about the swag at Long-Hall?"

"From your uncle himself. When I went back to my party, a few hours ago, I knew him the moment I

looked upon him; and, having taken an opportunity to say who I was, he told me all the facts I have told you. He told me more, Frank. He told me the real causes of your sudden flight from Ireland, and about the deceptive and shocking letter too, yet unexplained to him, which you wrote from London."

"There was no deception in that letter. I wrote it a few days before the appointed day when, according to the black-cap, I was to swing; and, without my expecting it,—indeed, without my caring,—a change of the sentence into transportation for life, which they called a merciful pardon, came to hand."

"And—heavenly Judge of hearts!" exclaimed his companion, much agitated, "from that eventual sentence, which was indeed merciful, you escaped, I suppose, to the place where I met you abroad?"

"The good preacher is shocked," sneered Frank; "why, Sir, having a wit to do it, would you have me remain the wretch I was?"

"Horrible!" clasping his hands, as he stepped back, "all this is more dreadful even than I had heard or thought. I had hoped that letter was only a falsehood. I had hoped the husband of Peggy Nowlan—"

"Pshaw, Sir, let me pass on, I say, or keep me here if you like or dare; for her sake, keep me here: you see I have not a moment to lose; between Maggy, her mother, and brother, and the two other bunglers, my name and identity cannot remain unknown from my uncle and the world, and, considering this, act as you please."

"Even supposing your accomplices to be silent, there is one man, who, the moment he sees your uncle, from whom he is now separated by chance, will make the discovery: he saw you lurking about Long Hall for some days before the attempted robbery."

"I guess the man; his name is Conolly."

"It is. But I wish not, for all we have talked about, to be the person to ensure your fate to you. I bid you stay only to satisfy me on the first question I asked, and out of which our talk has grown. When I told you I did not believe your assertion of the young

woman you had in charge being unknown to you, I was bound to show you why, by showing you that your uncle's account of your flight from Ireland was different from your own, and that, by your deliberate falsehoods, you had forfeited all claims to my belief: additional reasons now appear why I should doubt you. Yes, Frank; *you* knew who she was, although *I* sat by her side in the post-chaise for an hour without guessing the fact. You are not the man, supposing the very halter round your neck, to walk side by side with an innocent country girl, and not gloat your vicious curiosity by a view of her features, at the least. I believe, that while nature or habit has cursed you with a heart fit for any act of crime, your loose love of women is, perhaps, your master-passion. You knew her I say; what have you done with her? Recollecting all the past, and my newly acquired knowledge of the things you can do, there is room, Frank, for dreadful suspicions of the way in which you may have disposed of her. Come with me to the place where you say you left her."

"That I cannot do."

"You had better. The only, or the strongest reason why I do not hold you here till the civil officers come up, is on her account; but on her account also,—and, oh God! perhaps in a more serious sense! I *must* detain you until—Eternal Providence!"—the speaker interrupted himself, and catching Frank's arm, started up the street, as if a spectre approached him.

"What's the matter now? why do you turn white and shake so? Let go my arm."

"Look look, Frank Adams—my father!"

Daniel Nowlan, indeed, at that moment came up.

"Let us pass him, or turn off—come—I was not prepared for this, so soon—I cannot face the old man now; turn back with me."

But the afflicted father did not allow them time to walk away.

"I ask pardon, gentlemen," he said, in a hoarse exhausted voice, "a thousand pardons," getting before them and confronting them, "but I am looking for my child."

"Sir?" interrupted John Nowlan, meaning to affect a tone of indifference, while his pale features, and particularly his mouth, worked with a choking emotion.

"I meant no offence, gentlemen, and I'm sorry——,' pulling off, in the weakness of his mind and body, his broad-brimmed hat.

"Put it on, Sir! put it on! it is not to us, or such as us, your grey hairs should be exposed," again interrupted John.

"Thanks, Sir," bowing repeatedly, "many, many thanks: I see you pity me, and God knows, I want it; for the ould heart in my body within is a'most broke, at last;—oh, gentlemen, you're sodgers, and you ought to have a mind to help the wake an' disthressed: an' indeed, indeed, I'm wake an' disthressed."

"How's that, Sir? Is it poverty? you do not seem a poor man."

"Of this world's wealth I have enough; of its joys, too, God blessed me with an arly store; but as arly—welcome be the will o' the Lord—began to take from it. I had a son, Sir, an only son——but no matther, that's not it; an' I'm botherin' you, as I see by your looks. My present business in Dublin is this:—I came here to look afther that son, now not seen this many a long day: I tuck the sickness; it a'most brought me to death's dour: my family knew nothing of it till a few days agone; then, Sir, my daughther Peggy left home to see afther me, but is now in Dublin, an' never came next or near me, an' we can't make her off. It's said she was last seen wid a sodger, Sir, an' that's why I make bould to come fornent you; an' more, agin——"

"Has she not yet called at the place you stopped, Sir?" interrupted John.

"Avoch, Sir, no; never a call."

"You see, Frank," speaking aside to him, "here is proof of my suspicion; so now, at least account to me for my sister."

"Don't, gentlemen, don't lave me yet," resumed the old man, following them; "I was a'goin' to tell you more o' my thrials;—an' here they are. The

night after Peggy left the poor cabin, sure it was robbed an' spoiled of all the money in it; an'—och, sad is my heart to say it!—robbed of my other poor child, at the same time——"

"God of heaven!—what's that you say, Sir?"

"Kind gentleman," continued Daniel Nowlan, while he clasped his hands, cried like a child, and shook all over—"it's the thruth I'm tellin' you—the man that took my goold took my darlin' Anty, too: an' some that are as bad as he, an' that went down to the poor counthry wid him on another robbery, it seems—why, them people say that he was dhressed like one o' ye, gentlemen, a sodger like—but I mane no offence again—an' I ax pardon again; for it's sure I am he was no sodger, nor no thrue man neither to do what he done."

After a moment's pause, during which he made a great effort to keep in his rising passion, John Nowlan again took Frank aside. "I always hoped, Frank," he began, in a conciliating tone, "and I try to hope still, that you were and are a fair fellow on some points: I think, at least, that you will not continue the misery you see before you, and of which you have been the cause:—where are my sisters? where, in particular, is poor little Anty?"

"By Heaven, I know nothing of either."

"Don't outface me, Frank. This is a desperate case. Don't make me as desperate."

"Gentlemen," resumed Daniel Nowlan, a second time breaking in on their private discourse, "maybe, it's talkin' about it to thry an' help me ye are; an' so I ought to tell ye a word more. Afther Anty left home, she was seen along wid Peggy, however they came together, near the gate of Richmond barracks, an' they say the two girls went off, arm in arm, wid the sodger I first spoke to ye about."

"Well," resumed John, in a whisper, "I do not pretend to understand all your ways, or all that has happened, Frank; but, by this last account, both my sisters are traced into your hands; what have you done with them? Come, man, I do not believe you are so bad as to turn the deaf ear to my question: we have

been comrades, Frank, in toil and danger—we have been friends, brothers"—wringing his hand hard, while his voice failed and the tears flowed—"where are they?"

"I will answer you truly, on my life and soul. When I brought them into a house—"

"*A house!*—but go on."

"A ruffianly country fellow forced them from me, and I have not heard of them since."

"Take care, Frank, I say again. In this matter you see, if shame or ruin in any shape has come upon them, I am a party to it. So come, where are they?"

"I have already answered."

"Monster! where are they?" collaring him, and speaking in the loudest tone, while old Daniel Nowlan now began to look on John in some misgiving; "where is your first victim, poor Peggy? and where is the other innocent girl? where are my sisters? tell me now, man! the truth in one word!"

"Who calls them his sisters?" asked Daniel, as he stood trembling with clasped hands, and gazing, through tears, into John's face; "the Lord be praised for all his wondhers and blessins'! praise be to God! Is it their brother and my poor lost boy, John Nowlan?"

"Father, it is!" turning to him, as he still held Frank—"the wretched outcast, John Nowlan, who is at last punished in a ten-fold curse for all his doings! I dare not kneel down to you yet, father,—though I I will,—I dare not yet ask you to forgive me; something is to go before that—"

The old man, rendered almost insensible by his weakness and many sudden emotions, took off his hat, dropped, half stupified, on his knees in the street, and with extended arms and pallid lips, continued to mutter, "Praise be to God! the Lord be praised for all things!" A crowd began to stop and gather round.

"Deceitful, treacherous, and lying villain!" pursued John to Frank, "keep me no longer in this doubt! give me up this old man's daughters! Do they yet

live for his grey hairs, or live worthy of them? Answer me! Dare not repeat a word of your lying story! this moment lead me to them! this moment! or if you do not, or if they are not forthcoming, or if there has fallen upon that innocent child one spot, one stain, though no more than the touch of one vile finger, by Him that is to judge between us, I will wrench you limb from limb, joint from joint!"

"Let me go! I say, I have answered you."

"Liar and ruffian!" drawing his bayonet.

"John! John Nowlan, a-vich!" here cried his father, moving on his knees, and encircling those of his son with his arms: "John, ma-bouchal, never mind him a-while, but turn to the poor father; give me your two hands, and let me kiss your lips, John Nowlan, my son, my own an' only boy!"

He clasped John's knees close. The sinner uttered a heart-rending cry, and only pausing to dart his bayonet into its sheath, and to say to the by-standers "Secure him! he is a robber! a murderer! all that is bad!" disengaged his father's arms, lifted him up, received his embrace, and then flung himself lowly and in great agony at his feet.

In turn the old man instantly strove to raise him; some of the spectators assisted him, for he was badly able himself; and again they were locked in each other's arms.

"Don't cry, a-cuishla, don't, don't, it 'll all pass by, an' we'll live to see it; we'll buy you out from among the sodgers, an' the Father in heaven 'll forgive you as I do, for my sake an' my prayers, an' for all our sakes; an' when Peggy an' Anty is found, an' brought home again—"

John's attention was here diverted by Frank's voice, and his struggles to escape. He darted upon him like a tiger.

"Keep him fast!" he cried.

"You needn't tell us to do that," said a man in a strong English accent; "he is now my prisoner; I have been looking him up some time, and have just arrested him on a warrant from a London office, for

getting tired of Van's Land before his time; but, whatever is your concern with the youth, you can attend him to the next of your own police-offices at hand."

"Yes, that is the only way left; and now the loss of a second's time is a sin against Heaven. Come, man, no resisting! one struggle, one word, and I'll stab you to the heart! come and show me that, through you, I have not shamed, hideously shamed, or murdered my own sisters, the children of my own mother! and that the curse of father, mother, and sisters—of man and nature—is not, along with every thing else, fallen upon my head!—Come, Sir," turning to his father, while he held Frank hard; and Daniel Nowlan, and a commiserating or wondering crowd, accordingly followed him, Frank, and the London officer.

CHAPTER V.

In the kind of place to which they hastened, we are induced to anticipate their probable arrival, by raising the curtain of our last act upon other individuals of our history, about whom, we respectfully hope, our kind readers are, conjointly with them and us, much interested.

The scene is, indeed, a police-office, to be found on a certain quay of that city of quays, Dublin. Upon the bench, or rather behind the counter, is seated, or rather stands, a learned, amiable, but somewhat deaf old gentleman, whose early profession of barrister was not so all-engrossing as to hinder him, about the meridian of life, from accepting the at least certain and most useful appointment of police magistrate. By his side are his clerk, and occasionally one or two confidential officers. Before him a crowd of watchmen, "constables of the watch," and the jumbled and curious street-sweepings of the last night, all awaiting either

to make charges or to meet them as they can; but immediately at the side of the counter, fronting the worthy magistrate, we recognize two acquaintances, Peery Conolly and Molly Houlihan, and by their sides, Anty Nowlan, sitting in a very weak state upon a chair kindly provided for her, and Peggy Nowlan, standing over her and holding her hand.

At the moment when we look in, Peery and Molly are, with great energy, alternately addressing the bench.

"Yes, your reverance," says Peery.

"Whisht, Peery, he's no reverance; he axes pardon, my lard; he's a gawk from the country; yes, my lard."

"Yes, to what?" demanded the magistrate, who, by holding his hand scoop-wise to his ear, required no interpreter to hear the loud tones in which he was addressed: "yes, to what, good people? Pray listen a moment."

"Oh, by all manes, your honour," assented Peery.

"Spake your mind out, my lard," added Molly, both in a patronizing tone.

"Thank you. I wish, then, to see if I comprehend you. You were at last conveying the young woman to your lodgings, you say, and—"

"Yes, plase your lordship," taking up Molly's version of the title, "an' that's what riz the whole o' the last scrimmage on us," interrupted Peery.

"The what?"

"He's only a simple-tongued gorçoon, just cum up, my lard; he manes the 'ruction, like."

"And what does the 'ruction mean?"

"Lard save us, sure every christen-sowl on Ireland's ground knows that—the fight, my lard."

"Yes—that's it;—yes, your honour," pleaded Peery; "Molly was jist for gittin' 'em down the steps o' the cellar, when, up comes Misther Sodger again wid his faction,—'An' now, you baste,' says he to myself, 'I'll have your Irish life, so I will.'—'Will you?' says I—an' I up to him wid the sprong to the end o' the stick."

"What do you call the sprong?"

"Hould your whisht, I tell you, Peery, an' let me discourse his lardship;—jist on the turn o' the stairs, my lard—"

"No, Molly, you're wrong all over; you war on the flure, when it happened—"

"Musha, Peery, no—; see, my lard—"

"I hear a great many strange words, but I can see nothing: stand back; and you, my good girl—the elder girl, I mean—pray relate this last part of the case, as briefly as possible."

"I will tell you, Sir, if I am able."

"Take time; do not distress yourself."

"Thank'ee, Sir. Before we got to this good woman's place, we saw Peery Conolly running towards us, and the soldier and his friends following him. Hurrying down the cellar, she and me, with my little sister between us, I heard angry words above, where Peery stood to bear the brunt, and a noise of such things as that," pointing to Peery's bayonet, which, mounted upon his cudgel, he stoutly shouldered—"I knew they were pressing him too hard; I screamed and ran up; other good people came by, and the soldier and his faction ran away."

"Every word of id, jist as id turned out," said the hero of the tale.

"As pat as A. B. C." assented Molly, slapping one palm upon the other.

"Silence!" cried the magistrate, who, though deaf, was inconvenienced by the smack:—"did you then remain in her lodging?"

"May all good be multiplied ten-fold to her and hers, Sir!—I did; at first, to tell the truth, in doubts of her, the place was so poor and mean; but she undeceived me well, by the comfort she afforded to my sister and me."

"An' Peery, over head, in the sthreet, wid the bagnet on his shoulder, your lardship," added Molly.

"Your business here, then, is to prosecute the persons who have insulted you?"

"No, Sir; we forgive them, and hope they may be forgiven."

"No, my lard," said Peery; "the *meeroch*' 'ill come on 'em soon enough, widout our helpin' id; maybe we'd do a thing to 'em wid our sticks," throwing himself into position, gently flourishing the cudgel, and smiling confidently on the magistrate—"when thrashin' 'ud be good for 'em; but that 's no raison we'd turn informers; they shan't have that to throw in our teeth, when we get home to Tipperary." And Peery drew up, full of indignation that it should be supposed he would put his greatest foe into the fangs of the law.

"It has been mentioned to me that you came to Dublin to seek your father—perhaps you wish this office to assist you?"

"Oh, Sir!"—Peggy could get no farther.

"Avoch, no, Sir; too late for that," said Peery.

"Then what do you all want?"

"I ask your pardon, Sir," resumed Peggy, trying to check her tears;—"I'll try to tell you about it. This poor faithful boy went at my request to seek my father at the place where we knew he slept, and came back with word that a few moments before he had gone away in a carriage with another person, we didn't know where; home, we think and hope; and so, Sir, as I lost all my money on the road, and my sister lost all her's in that wicked house—and as we are quite strangers in Dublin, we came here—indeed this charitable woman brought us here—to ask—oh, Anty, Anty!" interrupting herself, and overcome by a sense of her forlorn situation, she fell on her sister's neck.

"Arrah, look at 'em," blubbered Peery, "an' your lardship sees how it is wid the cratures; that's the up an' down iv id; they have nothin' more to do in Dublin town; an' we want to send 'em home again, safe an' sound. The little Molly an' I had was at their sarvice, only they wouldn't hear of that; and there's a great gintleman, a friend o' my own, in the town, or nighhand to it, that 'ud give them or me a help, only myself doesn't know where to face to look for him, now that we're onct asundher: so here we up and we come

to beg a bit for 'em; an' if your reverence 'ud just bid the dhriver give 'em a lift on the sate, for nothing but out iv love or pity, like———"

"Do, my lard, an' may you have a long life, a good death, and a favourable judgment!" interrupted Molly, while tears ran down her harsh man's face.

"'Tis a sad story enough; yet there are so many impositions—in fact, if the young women can get any one to give them a character——"

"Och, I'll go bail for 'em," cried Molly.

"And who are you, pray?"

"I'm a basket, my lard," dropping a curtsey.

"A basket!"

"Yes, my lard; to a Misthess Taffey."

"She manes that she stops wid a Misthess Taffey, your lardship, a snug woman, in Pill-lane; and Molly is a gossip o' my own; an' I'll go bail for *her*, and for them too, along wid her."

"And who are you, too?"

"Peery Conolly, my lard," judiciously interrupted Molly, as Peery's stick, bayonet and all, began to describe some flourishes round his head, and his nether limbs to shuffle; both movements ominous of the usual rhyming answer, in his usual way—"Peery Conolly, a dacent father's and mother's child, though I say it."

"Deserted from Captain Rock, I presume."

"No, in throth, then, your honour," replied Peery, at once changing into a dry, simple subtlety of voice, face and manner;—"I'll never deny there was a thrifle o' that same goin' on in the place; but myself never loved nor liked their night-walkin', from a boy up; and sure they war for swarin' me; an' when I wouldn't, an' for fear they'd be angry, faith I cums away from them all to where's there's pace and quietness; so there's the holy and blessed thruth, your honour, since your honour put us on sayin' id."

"Well, we shall not question your loyalty, though we may take that freedom with your simplicity; and, on reflection, your respectable bail will do. Here," to an officer, "hold this money, and see the poor girls safe out of town."

"Glory to you!" screamed Molly.

"Long may you reign!" chimed Peery; "an' come now, a-vourneens; we'll have you safe back, any how —Murther!—an interruption," as he glanced to the door, "murther in Irish! stand out o' the way, there! hurroo!"

With one of his hop-step-and-jumps, Peery hurled himself through the people between him and the door, and instantly re-entered, prancing and capering round Daniel Nowlan, and making the peaceful office ring to his egotistical song, which the officers in vain tried to quell.

"Do you know who brought you a bit of the road in the shay, this morning, Peggy, a corra-ma-chree?" asked the old man, smiling through his tears, after long embraces had been interchanged between him and his daughters.

She was about to answer, when another bound and another cry from Peery, and the question of—"What brings any thievin' sodger here?" again diverted her attention to the door; and, looking up, John Nowlan appeared leaning against the jamb, pale, trembling, and, his eyes fixed on his sisters, gasping with smothered emotion. At first they did not know him; and there was a pause, during which Peery added, "Where's the sprong?" and approached the supposed intruder.

"Softly, man, softly," whispered John, beckoning him; "come here, let me hold you; I can hardly stand; I am their brother, John Nowlan."

"Och, mille murthers! here, lane your best on me, poor boy! poor priest John!"

"They will not know me—do you think they will?"

Peggy had been slowly advancing, her eyes distended and fixed on him; her face set; he breathed hard; his surprise and agony were declared in broken and wheezing sounds that "stuck i' the throat:" she came nearer; he extended his arms; she fell in them with a joyful scream.

"That's your brother John, Anty," resumed old Daniel, as Anty looked and wondered.

"That man, Sir! oh, it must be true, for Peggy

clings close to him, and you know him too, Sir; but, dear father, you do not know the great relief this gives me; another time you shall. Now must not I, also, embrace my poor brother?"

The father led her to his arms. Another yell burst from Peery: "Where's the sprong now, in arnest?" he cried out. In wonder, terror, and, from different reasons, common abhorrence, the two sisters clung to their brother, as the miserable Frank passed to the counter, his face haggard, his eyes staring, and his step uneven.

John Nowlan, with permission of the magistrate, removed his father and sisters to a private room, by which precaution they were saved from witnessing the horrors that ensued.

The officer, in whose custody Frank had entered, was about to lay his charges before the magistrate, when the appearance of a third party interrupted him; namely, Mr. Long, and his civil authorities, with Maggy Nowlan's mother, Mrs. Carey, and her son Phil. When Mr. Long beheld his nephew, horror seemed to fix him to the spot; nor did the poor wretch himself remain unmoved. Peery Conolly had sidled towards him, and addressed him in a confidential whisper.

"Why thin, tunder-an'-turf! what sort iv an ownshuck was you, at-all-at-all, to walk in here, of all places in the world wide? I didn't let out the laste word about you; an' if you have as much gumption in your head as a suckin' calf, you'll bid good-b'ye to 'em all round, or not wait for that same, but run for your life—The Lord o' Heaven save us!"—suddenly interrupting himself, and stepping back, terrified at the expression of face with which his advice was received.

The culprit first fixed his eyes on those of the speaker with a deep, steady despair: his manacled hands slightly moved under his watch-coat; and then his eye contracted; every muscle of his face and body winced, and he drew in and bit his under lip, as if from a sudden sensitiveness of acute pain. The next moment, his features again relaxed; his eye began to grow fixed

and glassy; he swayed from side to side, and would have fallen, but for the support of those near him.

As all looked on aghast, something dropped at his feet. The officer stooped, and took it up. It was a large clasp-knife, smeared with blood; and blood also trickled to the floor, as his person bent forward. Disguising his motions, beneath the loose watch-coat, he had, while staring into Peery Conolly's face, stabbed himself to the core of the heart.

After a moment, he raised his drooping head, and glared vacantly around, until his dulled eye rested on his trembling uncle: "All I could do for you, Sir,' he gasped out, smiling hideously, "was this—it saves me from the hangman's hands."

He again fell forward. He was borne out; but, before he reached a neighbouring hospital, was a corpse.

When the confusion occasioned by this sudden catastrophe had somewhat subsided, Mr. Long, though shaken in his very soul, was obliged to proceed in his charges against Mrs. Carey and her son. The young murderer shivered with despair under the anticipation of his fate; but his mother showed no emotion. Her clothes torn, and her hair dishevelled, she stood, with folded arms, upright and passive as a statue; and her large and once beautiful black eye, full of the hyena character, that for many years had belonged to it, was fixed, unwinkingly, now on her accusers, now on the magistrate. She did not frown, but her calm, savage glare was appalling.

"Wretched woman," said the magistrate, "do you not tremble?"

"Find that out by your larnin'," folding her arms harder; "or, here"—suddenly catching the hand of a near officer, and pressing his fingers upon her pulse; "does yours bate fuller or evener?" And when the man turned away in disgust, he related that the throb was steady and regular as that of innocence at rest.

Mr. Long, his sad and stern task over, sought the room whither John Nowlan had conveyed the old man

and his sisters. David Shearman was now added to their circle. All left Dublin together.

"Dear Barnes,

"It was about a month after this day that, in my wanderings among the black Tipperary hills, I became acquainted with the Nowlans, and learned their history. John Nowlan was then suffering under the relapse of a fever, which, accompanied by racking pains in his bones, had seized him the day he crossed his father's threshhold. When, about nine months after, I paid the family another visit, I found him restored to health, and, in a degree, to his peace of mind; once more engaged in studious pursuits, and once more habited in black. His misfortunes and experience had thrown a quiet sadness over him: and the humility of sin acknowledged and repented, stamped every feature of his face, and characterized his every look, tone, and motion. He told me he entertained hopes that he would soon be able to soothe his recollections of early crime and sorrow by the discharge of the duties of that sacred profession, to which, under the direction of Mr. Kennedy and his bishop, he was again permitted to look forward.

"Before I left Daniel Nowlan's truly hospitable roof, on this, my second visit, I had the pleasure of being bridesman to David Shearman, upon the auspicious night of his marriage with my gentle favourite, Peggy. She was married by Mr. Kennedy: Friar Shanaghan, after an excellent day's 'quest,' handing round the bridecake for his secular brother; and Mr. Long, at his own anxious request, gave her away. It was as merry a night as ever I passed. What with good cheer, dancing, and unlimited mirth on every hand, I was in such riotous spirits, that I whispered at Anty's ear my hope of a speedy opportunity of dancing at her wedding, also. The little rogue told me archly enough, 'it was a great shame, so it was, to be putting such quare things into a child's

head:' but when, by some pleasant reasoning, I had led her to believe the contrary, she engaged me at once to look out for her; adding, 'that if I didn't bring her one that was too little, or one that was too big, or one that was too old, or one that was too ugly, I would not find her very hard to be pleased.' We proceeded in much question and answer, as to the precise kind of man she might really prefer, and I found her as yet undetermined. She did, indeed, with more of archness than I suspected her for, give myself some hard knocks, by way of jocular hints: in fact, Barnes, I will talk with you upon this subject, as I consider you a person of more experience in such matters than I am.

"A. O'H."

PETER OF THE CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"THERE is a time for all things," saith the proverb; and while this is taken to mean that there are distinct times proper to all the various acts we have to perform, we presume it further permits the same thing to be done at different times in different places. For instance:—

The month of May, with its flowers, and its soft breeze, and its mild sun, is generally allowed to be the best season for young, ardent love, to blossom, and, from its novelty and freshness, to yield the purest delight. And yet we are aware of another season, in our own marrying country, when, tired of their gambols round the winter fire-side, weary even of their mutual devotions, and, as it were, miserable at their happiness, love leads his votaries, manacled, two by two, before the throne of Hymen, in processions so long and crowded as to create much squeezing and elbowing on the road;—alas! that the despotic divinity should so often prove ungrateful for the services of his laughing purveyor!—that he should so often bang his chamber door against the terrified little god of love, leaving him to fly away self-convicted of the folly of providing subjects for one so thankless!—But that is not our present business.

Lent, the chief time of fast and abstinence among

Roman Catholic people, sets in, upon an average, (for it is a "moveable" period,) towards the end of February. During its continuance, marriage, along with many other savoury indulgences, cannot lawfully be attained; and, as a positive forbearance of six or seven weeks seems too hard a trial, merely, perhaps, because it is a forced probation, a great movement of the middle and lower orders, male and female, takes place some time before; that is, during the season termed "Shrovetide," or, as our countrymen and countrywomen call it, "Shroft," so that the Irish Hymen is, conjointly with his more serious divinityship, the god of pancakes also.

As this great time approaches, the influx into country towns of rural belles, and, as a matter of course, of rural beaux, is very remarkable; the former, with their best beaver-hats, (articles of superior fashion) cocked after the smartest taste, or their caps set on with a peculiar air; their best smiles on their rosy lips; and their witching glances plainly understood by the opposite files to mean—"who wants a wife." Nor do "the boys" repair to this meeting unconscious of a motive, or negligent of the proofs of one. The most flaming waistcoats are provided; new corderoy smallclothes, with gilt buttons, (not always used for the purpose they have been put in, for they are left to swing open at the knees, agitating their long silk strings;) well-fitting stockings; and—the brogues kicked off on the occasion—small-pointed shoes, all showing, to the greatest advantage, the excellent leg and instep: while the hat set at one side, a roguish leer, an ostentatious display of person, whether "rollicking," or snug, or well-rigged to suit all tastes, are distinguishing signs to the fair critics, that "such, or such, have a notion of taking on" at the coming Shroft. Former courtships are renewed; new ones are entered upon; and they may be seen dividing in pairs, with their respective adherents, towards the public-house; the girls at first demurring, through well-acted timidity; yet, after much coaxing and pressing, kindly yielding to "take the treat;" alive as any of their betters to the

great axiom of woman's nature, that a conquest at a first attack is but indifferently valued.

If old folk happen to be stingy, the girls who can do it now embezzle "mescaums o' butther," "mauleens o' corn," "hanfuls o' praties," or "glaums o' wool," to be disposed of, under the rose, at the market; and with the proceeds of this contraband trade, throng to the riband-shops, where, if two or three from the same neighbourhood, and upon the same all-important errand, happen to meet, they may be observed, to the seller's cost, pondering, and consulting, and hesitating, and whispering, before a choice of the most destructive colour can possibly be made out of the variety before them; or, when things have come to a serious pass, the mother, and two or three old cronies, will accompany them, with an ample purse, to conduct more important bargains; and then money flies liberally, while many little stratagems are used that the sagacious shopman or shopwoman may not guess (what is easily conjectured) the exact purpose for which such unusual finery is procured: a secret the old dame tries to keep to herself, lest advantage should be taken of the admission in the price of the article, and which "the young thing" hides "because it is mannerly to do so."

Now is the time when the fair ones, who have previously been courted and flattered to little purpose, are expected to "lave off their thricks an' their quare ways," and give the long-expected, and, indeed, long-intended, yes, or *sha asthore*, as the case may be;—mentally adding, after all their little coquetry, (as one among them acknowledged to us, on a recent occasion) —"thankee for axin." Now is the time when fathers who have sons or daughters to settle in the world, meet in the little village public-house, and, "Darby, that's a clane, comely colleen belongin' to you," commences many a treaty which is discussed over a pot of ale. And then comes the assembling of all parties the next market-day, when the money matters are talked over "to the very farthen, an' to the farthen itself," betwixt the old men, with as much cool calculation as distinguishes the diplomacy of their superiors on similar

occasions; while the mothers, taking in hand another branch of the subject, discourse of the natural or acquired, the mental or personal perfections of the young couple. By one, the expert housewifery of the girl is set forth; "her nate, cool hands for makin' the butther;" the pieces of linen (to go in as part of her "portion") brought by her to "the blache" last season, and wrought with a thrifty foresight to the wants of a future establishment, whether we consider sheeting, or articles of male and female wear; in fact, all the young woman's useful accomplishments and habits are stated, and, as the tale comes from a mother's tongue, it cannot much be wondered at if, now and then, there occur a little exaggeration. And the other old dame displays, perhaps, with some slight decorations, also, her son's excellencies; his industry, late and early; his knowledge of his business, in all its branches of plowing, sowing, reaping, mowing, stacking, thrashing; his good-nature and good-humour; his spirit; his manly feats at running, or leaping, or hurling, or wrestling; nay, the eulogist may, with sparkling eyes, even hint his skill at cudgel or alpeen; and, in what they call "a pig's whisper,"—(that is, a confidential tone, meant, as it were, for one particular ear, while all around can hear it, if they will)—a few anecdotes of his prowess and conquests in this way may be thrown into the scale, as a make-weight.

All this while, placed in the back-ground, in a shady corner, where distance and twilight hide the blushes of the one, and give secrecy to the speech or acts of the other, the young couple, the conscious subjects of this pro and con, sit—if they like each other—"coortin' away, for the bare life;" or if, on the contrary, the match happen to be one of mere speculation and convenience, got up by the old people, and indifferent to them, they sit, at a shy distance, on the same form, staring at each other, and half resolving to upset every arrangement, and, in recollection of a "boy or girl of their own," have every thing their own way.

Many there are—("alas, poor country!")—and those even the greater number, whose matrimonial

treaties are arranged without any such debating; whose pecuniary resources are almost confined to the *soggarth's* fee; who will be necessitated to move, by many pitiful stories, his christian compassion, or will even invent some melancholy untruth, that he may be induced to perform the ceremony at an under price, and leave them a shilling towards the stock for the scanty wedding-feast. The rest they trust to Providence; and, sooner than permit the long Lent to pass over their heads in celibacy, offer their hands for the manacle with as jovial a grace, as much precipitancy, and as good a hope of passing a pleasant honey-moon, as if they were certain of two days' victuals after the bridal night, or as if their progeny were to be the heritors of abundance, kindliness, and comfort, not of poverty, neglect, and wretchedness.

Nor is it the country atmosphere alone that prompts to matrimonial movements, as the Shrovetide comes on. The self-same inspiration pervades the town air. In our considerable town, at least, Shrovetide is gene rally understood to mean the season for maids to become wives, and bachelors to change their condition.

There are, we believe, in all such communities as we speak of, regular visiting folks, of both sexes, necessary to the comforts of the stay-at-home part of the population, as carriers of news, true or false, and circulators of the petty tattle so acceptable to the ever-craving appetite of curiosity, and who are, therefore, welcome visitors almost wherever they go. Among this class of persons, elderly maids and bachelors, possessing small annuities, just sufficient to keep up a decent appearance out of doors, yet too scanty for their comfort at home, form a considerable portion. To them, a cup of tea in the evening, with, if they be of the male sex, the addition of a glass of the good beverage, whisky punch, is very acceptable; hence, finding it their interests to render themselves agreeable, they take good care to come furnished to the fire-sides of their friends with ready answers to the questions most suitable to every season; and none of them will deny that, as pancake-day draws near, they find it peculiarly

necessary to keep an eye on the motions, and to dive into the resolves of the marriageable persons around them, in order to appear fully prepared for the universal query—"what weddings are going on?"—Indeed, and by-the-way, the very kind of individuals we mean sometimes supply, in their own persons, and apart from their information about others, more direct evidence of the benign influence of this period. From among their throng, even maids of long standing and bachelors of ancient growth, step out with a livelier grace; wax unusually brisk and mettlesome; sport new "fronts," selected for the occasion, or new wigs, of the recollected colour of their locks, what time the mother's care had smoothed and polished the boy's ringlets; and look about them, and trot in the direction where fellow-feelings prevail, full of pleasing ideas, and the half-forgotten music of early life again tingling in their ears;—and we are happy to add that, even in their regard, and always considering them bound to choose among themselves, the season does not invariably prove inauspicious.

Staid citizens, fathers, and uncles, who have previously taken an account of stock, ascertained the tot of the ledger balance-sheet, and withdrawn their daughter's or their niece's portion from the perils of business, begin to cast a cautious eye around; make under-hand inquiries as to how their young male neighbours stand in the world, and become close spies on their actions; and when a youth of substance and character is at last selected, their cordial recognition of him as he passes their door, or meets them in the street, or in a friend's house, is easily interpreted into, "Son-in-law, how do you do?"

Youngish men, who have made improvable establishments, and to whom the entry, "Stock. Dr. Cash," would be a pleasing item, divest their features of their very sober cast, brighten them up with a holyday air, employ the most esteemed fashioners, assume the cavalier, seat themselves on horseback with as much grace as is possible, or, if not with grace, at least with an affected recklessness of the dreaded results of their

new situation; put "money in both pockets," and set off to scour the adjacent country in search of wives—at a gallop, if they can attempt it with safety, or even a little daring; velocity of movement being esteemed as most in character with the gaiety of wooers. But these doughty knights-errant will scarce ever be seen entering, with their "God save all here," where the old chest or the old cow's horn is known to be empty. With them, love is "no welcome customer," unless he come into the shop with a money bag on his back, prepared to fling it on the counter, or pour it into "the till;" so laden, they are happy to see him; empty-handed he may stay outside; and then any young woman, no great matter whom, burthened in a similar way, will be as well received without him.

Novelty is a prevailing charm for human eyes; and young maidens who have stepped into a town on market-days, to delight themselves with the brilliancy of its shops and its streets, sometimes prefer, therefore, a townsman to a mere rustic sweetheart; and when such a one, as has last been described, comes, careering at a gallant pace towards the farm-house, in the proper season for such a visit, they seldom fail to guess the motive of his journey. The fair and conscious object of attraction will, on this occasion, be posted, covertly, at a casement; behind her the vanithee; still more behind, the nurse; and, over the shoulders of all, elevated on a three-legged stool, perhaps the serving wench: each eager to witness the dashing advance of the candidate for favour, and to applaud or criticise, as the case may be.

If fair young city-virgins now observe significant movements in the visits of father and mother out of doors, or become aware, without seeming to be at all aware, that unusual consultations are going forward, they hope, and trust, and pray, morning and evening, that from somebody of whom they dreamt the last All-hallow-Eve, overtures have been received. Now serving-maids quit one state of servitude, only to enter suddenly upon another, not so easily to be got rid of at a "warning;" now apprentices, committing a breach

of that part of their indentures which binds them not to enter the matrimonial state till the expiration of their long seven years, steal out of an evening, get married, steal back behind the counter next morning, and out again at a window when "the shop is shut." Desperate run-away matches are daily heard of, precipitated by the not-always successful endeavours to marry young people against their inclinations, or else by the impatient love that despairs of parental forbearance, and shrinks at the long period of privation between "Ash Wednesday" and Easter Sunday.

As story-tellers, we must be supposed rather closely to regard human nature, and motives to action, in order to understand the value of occurrences around us; certainly we have learned to divine, almost to a nicety, the state of thought indulged, as Shrovetide comes on, by all our acquaintance, and even by those with whom we are only casually civil or conversant. The never-failing, though, perhaps, newly-assumed smile, so soft, so constant, so bewitching, of a fair friend; the manner so determinedly obliging; these symptoms—particularly if an emendation upon usual habits—we take as proof that first preliminaries are arranged for the grand step; that she has learned as much from her parents, and that she is content to venture upon a new character, before Shrove-Tuesday, if she can be pleased with an offer.

When, with a short hurried step, indicating a desire to reach a given point as soon as possible; with downcast eyelids, sometimes allowing to escape around an unquiet, timid glance, expressive of a certain sensitive fearfulness that people are looking at her, and speaking of her, as she goes along; when, showing these symptoms, a pretty, modest, flurried little creature crosses our calm observant path, we at once conclude, and half sigh with, we believe, a kind of reflected pleasure at the conclusion, that she has yielded, very lately, a blushing promise to make her chosen youth all the happier of this happy time.

If we see nothing singular, nothing unusual in a young woman; nothing but the decently-measured

tread; nothing but the every-day port, or only the old smile, common to a handsome face; then we judge that matters are not in train that season.

We are quick to discern the sneer which, more positively than ever, agitates the features of often-disappointed spinsters, as they descant on the prospects and pretensions of some who are about to attain the envied rank of matronly consideration: and just as quick to note the proud ostentatious bearing of others of the same standing, who have been successful in the grand object of the day, and are at length on the eve of being of consequence in the world, notwithstanding the long forebodings of their friends, and the terrible apprehensions of their own bosoms.

We have learned, on the other hand, to judge by the more than usual attention to personal appearances of an industrious youngster, by his studied suavity, and by his skilful disguise of whatever of the unamiable we have previously noted in his character, that he is "on the look-out." From the junction of bustle and briskness, in another, of hurry and good-humour, of an important manner, and yet a growing disposition to say smart things, we set down that he is preparing his affairs for the spectacled criticism of some cool examiner who has a fair charge to dispose of: or, he is taking measures, perhaps, to leave things in such a train that, with propriety, he may be absent for a space, after the ceremony, supposing him of sufficient consequence to aim at throwing off the good old custom of wedding-cheer and bridal dance, and, conformably with the fashionable scale, take a scamper for the honey-moon to the metropolis, where he can link gentility and pleasure with business, and (his wife's portion in his pocket-book) purchase a fresh stock of goods, to be home a day or two before he returns to the shop.

We know why the sleek new suit is shyly mounted by him who has worn the former one time out of mind. We know why the elderly person, who has waited till about his forty-fifth year for a meet recurrence of the season, smooths down his hair with unwonted pre-

cision, and is seen every evening, after the hour of business, stepping out with—even should there be no cloud—an umbrella tucked under his arm, and cautiously entering one certain house.

If we see painters and carpenters, and upholsterers and paper-hangers, going into a bachelor's mansion, they give "notes of preparation."

If a young man of sober habits be detected with a song-book, or a jest-book laid on the leaf of his day-book, it is a sign of considerable restlessness at the approaching season. But if such a person be observed, at the age of thirty, skipping secretly into the private room of a dancing-master, there can no longer be a question but that he is about to caper out of the state of celibacy.

And should we meet, in one of our accustomed outlet walks, some fair young girl whom we once knew blooming and bounding in health, but now pale, drooping, and sad; her eye shorn of the laughing ray that often flung pleasure over our path; her native elastic step changed into a cheerless drooping gait; in fact, her usual appearance and character lost in the dull languor that heart-sickness throws over features and person; should such a being happen to pass us in our lonely promenade, we conclude that Shrovetide brings no joy to her; that either the youth she doats on is torn from her, or that, before the season lapses, parental tyranny will force her into the arms of some wretch she loaths; that avarice has grasped the shrinking hand which would fain yield to the soft pressure of affection; and, instead of the silken bonds of true-love, that a chain, not the less ponderous because its links are of gold, is about to be fastened round the breaking heart;—from such a study, such are our conclusions; for, imitating the enterprise of the bland and delightful Master Crayon, we have the courage to proclaim that we, too, are believers in "broken hearts."

Shrovetide is the Soggarth's harvest; his season of pleasing because most profitable labour; his draught of fishes; his time of gathering in the vineyard. The antique grim-faced knocker of his door, painted, time out

of mind, the colour of the door itself, sounds from morning to evening, many a bold, many a timid, and many a thundering summons, as the case may be, from those who come to announce intended weddings, at which he is, fortunately for him, so indispensable an agent. His housekeeper,—generally some humble relation, or some "forbidding-looking ould woman," of whom the very first view silences the tongue of scandal, and compels peeping suspicion to turn away his keen eye to some more plausible and inviting object—such a one, we say, the priest's housekeeper, must be constantly on the alert to answer the scarcely-heard knock of the poor couple who come to be married in the parlour, without even the full fee on such occasions, and who dream not of bride-cake or wedding-supper; or the rather bolder peal of those who call to invite the priest to celebrate the marriage at the house of the bride's father, damping however the good man's rising hopes and the ardour of his assent, when they add, that "poor people must have poor weddings;"—and, again, and best of all, the long resounding tantarrara which distinctly prefaces the summons of the wealthy farmer or citizen, who, with an air of self-importance, arrives to intimate the coming nuptials of his daughter, and at whose instance the priest smilingly promises a punctual attendance, anticipating rows behind rows of rich folk, each ready to lay down a pound note, at least, in exchange for a portion of the magical bride-cake.

If the priest be, to say nothing more, even a clever man, it will palpably be his business as well to prevent the possibility of a close acquaintance (unless by authority) between the sexes, as to promote, so far as in his power lies, every disposition to enter the holy marriage state. Accordingly, he must have his eye about him; watching the growth of his fair young parishioners into a marriageable maturity; glancing, here and there, for proper husbands to match them; and then, towards Shrovetide, he may hint his observations to all parties concerned, young and old, and conclude the business to the satisfaction of all, and to his own benefit.

Shrovetide brings grist to the mill of the followers of many other trades and occupations. The pastry-cook, or, to use a more local name, the confectioner, prepares the dainty bridal cake for the city wedding. The baker manufactures the more ponderous mass, "*baugheen brigola*,"—the loaf or cake with fruit in it,—for the country feast, at which a crowd is to participate, who reckon on a good substantial slice for their money. Of the former, only small pieces are distributed, too delicate to be eaten, but sacredly treasured up to be dreamt upon—(if passed through the bride's ring, all the better,)—by the sighing maiden, who hopes, through its talismanic power, to conjure round her midnight couch of virgin innocence the adoring and adored shade of him, who, under Heaven, may, the very next Shrovetide, put it in her own power to endow a cake with the same effects, for the benefit of her former companions left behind her in the shadow of the valley of maidenhood.

As it must be pretty certain that a bridegroom who can get married in a new suit will not retain his old clothes, tailor's shears are, of course, kept clipping more constantly than at other seasons; and, for a like reason, dress-makers of all grades ply the subtle needle at Shrovetide more nimbly, and with lighter hearts than, in our town, they can be said to do at any other time the year round. Ribands, first, of all colours, then, as the season closes, white ribands in particular, flutter out at the vendors' doors in gay abundance and confusion; and white gloves, white silks and satins, white muslins, almost every thing white, in fact, are necessarily in equal demand. Pipers, fiddlers, itinerant musicians of every kind, are on the alert, for it is the season of dancing. Beggars post, in tattered droves, from one nuptial bower to another, for it is the season of feasting and bounty. Nay, and some individuals relinquish more reputable occupations, but such as, at this season, are less profitable, to join the armies, the hordes of mendicants, who, according to ancient custom, will have shared amongst them the profuse remnants of the wedding feast, and the largess of the wedding guests.

In a word, Shrovetide, in Ireland, is a time of unusual stir, bustle, and earnestness; a time of general consciousness and common sensations; a time when the thoughts and hearts, male and female, of a whole community, labour and throb with but one notion, and, however it may be diversified, one feeling; a time of sighing and speech-making; of capering, of kissing, of piping, fiddling, and singing; of present happiness, at least,—(we have nothing to do with the future)—to almost every one; and big with interest and importance to the kingdom at large, although with philanthropic dismay and regret to Mr. Malthus, and his disciples and students in political economy.

CHAPTER II.

We regret that, for particular reasons, we cannot, as we are used to do, give the name of the district in Ireland in which the scene of the present tale is laid; but it was near to a village (that, as we go on, shall be distinguished by being called *the* village,) through which, as well as through the whole adjacent country, the time of Shrovetide spread its influence, that, about fifty years ago, standing at his spacious parlour windows, before dinner, the proprietor of an important mansion saw, lounging, as if bashfully, up the avenue, two rustic persons, one an old, the other a youngish man, whom, at a first view, he did not know, and for whose uncalled appearance at such an hour, on a working-day, he was puzzled to account. "Who can they be?" he half soliloquized, although another person sat in the room,—"not Tady Corrigan, surely, with the half-year's rent; no, he's scarcely so punctual; nor his gossip, Mike Leary, with any part of the two half-years, so long promised; yet they walk straight towards the hall door; Redmond," turning to the individual mentioned, a youth of about twenty, who sat

listlessly in a chair at the fire, and, it might be said, idly too, did not his bent brow, as he gazed at the embers, his folded arms, and, indeed, the general expression of his intelligent features, argue at once a mood of abstraction, merely, and a character of which idleness could have been no natural portion. "Redmond, who are those people?"

The young man slightly started, looked vacantly around, and in a cold tone, asked, "Where, Sir?" His elderly companion as coldly directed his regards out at the window; the youth, scarcely rising or glancing down the avenue, said he did not know who they were.

"I think one of them is Patt Lynch, that bought the timber of Kilaldy wood last week. How much of that account has he left unpaid, Sir?" again addressing the lad.

"Who, Sir? what account?—"

With some cautious asperity, and a remark that his thoughts might, perhaps, be better engaged, and yet sufficiently alive to afford more attention, the senior renewed his statement and his question; but still gained little information. The youth was sorry to say, he really knew nothing of the state of that particular account; indeed, to tell the truth, he believed he had quite lost all recollection of it.

The catechist frowned, askance and unseen, at him, bit his lip, and retorted in a measured tone,—"Nor of any other business, I fear, Sir, which I have trusted into your hands; nor of any other matter, Sir, fitted to your precarious situation in life; to your pretensions or your prospects."

"What that situation, and those pretensions really are, Sir, you know best," answered the person thus animadverted upon, coolly and gloomily, and laying an expressive emphasis on the word "really."

"I do, young gentleman," said the other, nodding slowly at him,—"and, for the purpose of rousing you to a due sense of the efforts you are bound to make in the world, I have been compelled, much against my nature, and my feelings for you, to explain, over and over, that delicate question."

"And I have been thinking, all this morning, of asking you to explain it once again, Sir, when you may be at leisure to give me a little more information."

"Indeed, Sir?" with another unseen sneer—"but no matter; I am at your service at all times; and, perhaps, the sooner we conclude the subject the better for both."

"Perhaps," said the lad:—"and now, Sir," drawing to the window, "I can tell you who those poor men are; Darby Roach, and his eldest son, who rent the fifty hill-acres from you at Poulnamana."

"What, in Heaven's name, brings them here to-day?—no whining case of hardship, I hope: and now, what ails them?"—for, as he spoke, the old man, Darby Roach, having at last come near enough to recognize the amply-puffed and highly powdered head of "the masther," in the parlour window, strongly contrasted as it was to a complete suit of black, worn, with rather a professional air, over a middle-sized, substantial figure; Darby, we repeat, having distinctly caught this indication that the very eyes of the great person he wanted to see were fastened on him, first stopped to make a scrape and bow, to pull off his hat, and put it on again; then suddenly changed his hitherto lounging gate into a quick one, which, gradually increasing as he approached the house, at last ended in a run, as brisk as any man of sixty could command upon occasion. His son, as he has been described, remained behind him, holding his hat in his hand, and looking on the ground with a bashful and conscious smile.

Sweeping by the steps of the hall door, the father soon presented himself outside the window, and, stopping there, renewed his scrapes and bows, now addressed to both the gentlemen in the parlour, and accompanied by broad grins, of such a kind as bespoke earnestness in a very interesting and, withal, a very tickling subject.

"Well, honest Darby, and what's the matter with you to-day?" said "the masther," answering his looks and motions, rather than asking a question. The old man grew serious.

598897 A

"Why, then, your honour, nothin' at all; only it's what sends us to you, to-day, is about a gorçoon of ours, an' somethin' that's goin' to happen to him, we b'lieve."

"Well?—I thought, just now, when you both looked so troubled, that something *had* happened to him; that, perhaps, Cushneiche* and the Yellow Sailor had paid you a visit, and borrowed all you had towards the next gale day;" alluding to the leader and subaltern of a celebrated gang of highwaymen and house robbers, then the terror of the surrounding country.

"No, then, Sir; nothing o' the kind; an' if Cushneiche came, may be he wouldn't rise the thrifle so asy."

"Then Dick has got into some scrape or other?"

"Troth no, Sir; no scrape in life; only—Ristharde!" —calling and beckoning to his son,—"only, your honour, it's where we war comin' this mornin, was to ax your advice on the head o' getting the gorçoon we tould you of—married;" letting the word at last slip out, half in confidence, half shyly, as it were.

"Oh; which of the lads do you mean, Darby?"

"Musha, then, Sir, the boy is to the fore, only the shyness an' the shame won't let him show himself forenent you:—Ristharde!" raising his voice, and increasing his gesticulation—"Musha, Ristharde! you ownshuck o' the devil, come here, I tell you."

Slowly and sheepfacedly advanced Ristharde, a big man (notwithstanding his father's appellation) of more than thirty years of age, clad in his working clothes, much the worse of the wear; loosely wrapped in the great blue Irish top-coat; and still holding his head down, and twirling his "caubeen" between his hands. He seemed fresh out of the mire of a fallow-field lately drenched in rain; his attire, his brogues, his gigantic hands, crusted with the soil; nay, however he had contrived it should happen, his strong, "raven hair" had also become smeared and clotted with wet clay, which, either from profuse perspiration, or a smart shower, subsequently resolved itself into a liquid

* Swift-foot.

state, and now ran in streaks down his face. Bashfully, we have said, this graceful bridegroom came on at his father's repeated summons; apparently as bashful, indeed, as a green-horn of seventeen placed in the same situation, and feeling himself, from tender years and unimportance in the world, unfitted to it; yet some of this excessive modesty and mopishness might not have been quite so natural to Ristharde as he was willing people should think.

"Ha, Dick—so, you are for a change?"—resumed "the masther," when "the boy" was at last "to the fore."

"Sorrow's the much myself knew about it, Sir," answered Ristharde, "until about half an hour agone, when my father came into the field, an' tould me it was all settled, an' axed me to throw down the spade an' go with him, face to face, to the colleen herself, an' stop a start on the road, an' tell you the news, Sir."

"Well; I'm obliged by your visit; but do you think you are fine enough, Dick, for your other visit,—to the sweetheart?"

"Sorrow a bit but I think I am, Sir; sure we won't be for cajoulin the poor colleen with the Sunday clothes on us, but let her see us as we are, in the week days, for the year round."

"Very fair and honourable. Who is the girl, Dick?"

"Musha, Sir, she's the daughter o' one Mickle Tobin, Sir: a clane, clever colleen, though we say it that shouldn't," answered Darby: "a girl o' the Tobins; the Tobins o' the Hill; dacent people; an' as nate a girl as ever dhruv a slip of a pig to a fair: sure your honour knows them we mane."

"I do; you speak of Kitty Tobin, foster-sister to Mr. Redmond, here?"

"No doubt bud you have her, Sir; the self same for all the world: an' so, Sir"—he stopped, looked down, then askance on Ristharde, and, sidling to him, began to elbow the bridegroom to speak for himself.

"Musha, asy, father, asy," whispered Ristharde.

"Asy, *you*, I tell you, you big bosthoon," Darby

broke out, "an' tell Square Pratt, wid your own ugly mouth, what's the rason o' your comin' here at all."

"Why, then, just to ax his honour's pardon for giving him the invite to the weddin', God bless him; an' what else 'ud bring me here?" at last said Ristharde, courageously.

"Yes, your honour, that's it," added Darby, bowing and grinning.

"Well, Dick, I'll be your guest."

"Thankee, Sir, an' long life to you: an' the young misthress, Sir,—God preserve her kind heart an' her comely face!—Miss Nelly, Sir—sure you wouldn't be for lavin her out, when it's to her, above all the ladies in the parish, poor Kitty 'ill be comin', I'm thinkin', for some o' the convaniencies o' the white dhress, an' other things, for the weddin'? musha, our hearts 'ud be heavy without her."

"Miss Pratt will be happy to oblige you and Kitty, in any way, I answer for't, Dick."

"Thankee again, Sir," put in Darby; "an' sure we're thryin' to get her aq'ls at laste, to sit forenent her, Sir, at the weddin'; there's the strange lord's daughther—it's a lord, or barrow-knight, or somethin' after that manner, I believes they calls him—an' she's his daughther, or a sisther's child, any how;—there's her, Sir, that was so good to us, along wid Miss Nelly, when your honour stayed that long start out o' the counthry, an' when the sickness, an' the throuble of every kind was in the poor cabin; an' sure, tho' it's not our right, as any of her tenants or her people, to ax the convanience, she won't refuse us, out of a good heart, for as lofty and as grand as she is."

"Choose your guests as you like, Darby; we go to oblige you."

"Och, no fear o' that, Sir—an' there's the ould sthrange lord himself, if we could get a hoult of him, 'ud be fit for your own honour to make up to—but, musha, little chance of it, he's so shy o' comin' out, an' so fond of his books, we hear."

"Then the old count still persists in the life of seclusion and bad neighbourhood, which he led before I last went to Dublin, Darby."

"Musha, Sir, more and more; sence the night he come among us, afther buying the estate, now two years agone, come next Asther, down to this blessed day, not a neighbour, or a neighbour's child ever set eyes on him, I b'lieve, barrin' a gorçoon that might be for climbin' up the garden wall of an evenin', an' so had a peep at his honour, walkin' up an' down, or hiding in a summer-house in the corner. But no help for that. Hard to dhraw blood from a turnip; an' there's as good fish in the sey as ever was caught, Sir; an' so, if your honour has no demur to Masther Redmond, there, he'll be handy by you, at any rate, an' isn't to be left out for the wide world."

"Mr. Redmond answers for himself:—Redmond, what do you say?"

During the latter part of this dialogue, the person spoken to had turned to the mantle-piece, and, leaning his arm on it, relapsed into a fit of abstraction. Now quietly looking up, he asked to have the question renewed; it was accordingly put, a second time, in the best possible shape, by Darby and Ristharde together; but the young man answered he was sorry he could not attend. While, with half-closed eyes, Mr. Pratt looked askance at Redmond, as if to make out the motive of a refusal not to have been anticipated, the bridegroom and his father poured forth together, a loud, affectionate, and plaintive remonstrance. But with no effect. The youth persisted in a polite denial; and not even the reminding him that "sure Kitty was his own foster-sister," could induce him to withdraw it. So, after naming the evening, one a week off, upon which they hoped to see Mr. and Miss Pratt at their nuptial feast, Darby and Ristharde bowed themselves away from the window, in a manner that showed much disappointment and sorrow at their last failure.

But before the reader is introduced to the rustic wedding, partly as humble preparation for which the first chapter has been written, he will please to follow, with us, the closing of the present evening in Mr. Pratt's house.

After the suitors had withdrawn, the young man resumed his leaning and thoughtful position at the man-

tel-piece, and Mr. Pratt continued to stand, his back half turned to him, at the open window, looking out upon his ample lawn, as if mentally occupied too. Neither spoke a word; and, for some time, neither moved. At last, while Redmond still remained motionless, his companion turned from the window to an escritoire, unlocked and opened it, and sat down, as if no one had been present, to look over some papers. Candles were brought in; and again there was a silence, not broken until a servant, in modest though rich livery, appeared at the door to announce dinner. Both gentlemen roused themselves, and issued into the drawing room.

"Miss Pratt keeps her chamber, and we dine alone, Redmond," said Mr. Pratt, as he sat to table.

"Is Miss Pratt so ill, Sir?" asked Redmond, with the only interest of manner that day observable in him.

"Only a slight headache; nothing serious;" and dinner went on in silence. It was over; the servant motioned out of the room; and Mr. Pratt, after filling his glass, pushed the decanter to Redmond.

"I'm not inclined to drink wine this evening, Sir," pushing it back.

"Indeed? that's a new resolution, Redmond."

"It is, Sir," his head was down as he said this; Mr. Pratt measured him with one of his peculiar looks, but added nothing. When he was about to fill his glass a second time, "Redmond, he continued, "I didn't think you would have refused to oblige these poor people to-day; may I ask why you cannot accompany us to their little wedding? Something of the same reason that keeps you from the glass of good claret, I suppose."

"Much the same, Mr. Pratt: but let us end this cross-questioning; I'm tired of it. The plain fact is, Sir, I cannot feel, after your information of yesterday, that I have a right any longer to revel it at other people's cost, as hitherto I have done: and indeed my resolution is almost taken to withdraw myself from this place, and try to fashion out, with my own hands, whatever lot I am doomed to, rather than live ——"

His voice sunk, and he stopped. His companion was silent a moment, and then spoke. "What *is* the matter with you, Redmond?—I'll not say you deal unkindly by any one in indulging in these fancies; but what do you wish me to do? Could I—you force me to ask the question—could I have better discharged my duty to you, from your childhood to the present hour? —At school, and at college, you had the allowance, as well as the education of a gentleman."

"I know it, Sir, I know it, and am not forgetful; but with the secret you kept from me, and half of which you still keep, perhaps all that attention was as injudicious as kind. Yes, the education and, for the moment, the maintenance of a gentleman, without the claims of one; that I experienced."

"And why not the claims of one, Redmond? The most obscure individual may, in these happy countries, rationally propose to himself the attainment of the rank and character of a gentleman: to talents, honour, and industry, no elevation is denied; besides, as my adopted son ——"

"Mr. Pratt," interrupted the youth, "tell me, in one word, why must I not inquire of you the real name and situation of the man whom you say was my father? why am I left a prey to the horrible doubts your refusal starts in my mind?"

"Now, Redmond, you are in an uneven humour, because, on some late occasions, I thought it my duty to press a renewal of your studies in the honourable profession your own early bias preferred, and of which, in my early manhood, I was, myself, no disreputable member: but, perhaps, I should call your boyish turn for the bar a fancy, or a whim, rather than settled inclination: or, perhaps, the discovery that Blackstone wrote poetry—"

"Pardon me, Sir; what you insist upon as the cause of my present uneven temper, as you call it, I do not waste a thought about; whenever you exhorted me to be studious, I felt you meant me well; and that was all. Pray tell me, Mr. Pratt, tell me this, at least—was my parent as poor as you say he was unfortunate?—am I

absolutely bounden to your charity for my education and bringing up?"

"I have before satisfied you on that head, Redmond: when, before his death, your father committed—that is—sent you to my care, he also had conveyed into my hands a sum of money sufficient for sending you to school and college, as you ought to be sent, with an overplus of about a thousand pounds to assist you in a profession."

"Then he was not 'unfortunate,' Sir, from a very mean lot or station, at least? did he hold the rank of a gentleman, Mr. Pratt? had he lands, or a profession, or was he in business?"

"Answers to these questions you must excuse my giving, Redmond."

"Again, Sir, I ask—I demand, why?"

"For your own sake—for your own peace of mind and respectability."

"Respectability!—Sir, you ought to explain, now at least—what, Sir!—either my father or myself, then—oh!—for God's sake, Mr. Pratt, relieve me of this torture—perhaps—perhaps, Sir, my birth was dishonourable?—legally and morally dishonourable?"

"I do not believe it was."

"Then to know who my father was—and to have it known I am his son—*that* would destroy my peace of mind and respectability?—*that* is the meaning of your term 'unfortunate'—my father was unfortunate through his own fault—through crime—depravity?"

"Redmond, it will be useless to continue your questions, in any shape, or however modified."

"But, Sir, your silence leaves me to imply, as fully as your explanation could, what you would have me believe he was."

"What I would have you believe, boy?—the language you use to me is new."

"Perhaps, Sir; but there are new reasons for it."

"Ay, indeed!"

"Sir, I do not believe my father committed acts that could disgrace me, his son."

"And I have never said he did."

"But, Mr. Pratt, I remark again that you leave me to imply as much:—and now pray hear me on. Why, until within these few days, did you lead me to understand that I was the son of a relation, dead in the West Indies?"

"For the very reason that now ties up my tongue as to the positive identity and character of your parent: and I was surprised out of my retraction of that story, Redmond—you had vexed me by your persevering idleness and inattention to my wishes, and I told you so much of the truth as you know, in order to spur your pride and vanity to a manly exertion; now I must regret having been so imprudent, and having given you so much *unnecessary* pain."

"Then, Sir, I am in no degree related to you?"

"In no degree."

"And you persist, Mr. Pratt, in withholding from me my real condition, my father's real condition, when he lived—my real name, in fact—I am not even to receive, at your hands, the poor justice of——"

"Foolish boy, curb your passion, and correct your language. Listen to me. It was your father's last request, conveyed to me——."

"*Conveyed* to you, Sir? and I was *committed* to your care?—did you know my father?—were you personally acquainted with him?"

"I never saw him."

"Indeed, Sir? and how, then, may I ask, did he come to select you as my—guardian?"

"Through a mutual friend."

"What is that friend's name, Sir?"

"It were useless to inform you; for he, too, is dead."

"You, then, Mr. Pratt, are singly acquainted with this mystery of my parentage?"

"I do not believe any other human being shares it with me."

"And are absolutely determined to hold it to yourself, Sir?"

"Immoveably determined. Listen, I say. It was your parent's last request, that his station, character, family, and even name, should for ever be concealed from his son."

"And that, too, Sir, I take leave to doubt:" the young man rose from the table, pale, and his eye and manner indicating a strong and obstinate purpose: he had advanced a few steps, as if to address himself to Mr. Pratt in such a way as could not be resisted, and that gentleman, also rising, had answered his last remark with,—"Impertinent and imprudent boy, what do you mean?"—when, suddenly, the youth checked himself; drew his hand across his face; paused; and when he at last spoke, tears were in his eyes, and his broken voice sounded in supplication rather than threat.

"Imprudent I am, Sir, and was about to be more so; but now I implore you to listen to me;—I have said new reasons had occured for my present mood; let me tell you some of them. You knew of my chance meeting with Count O'Ruark, in consequence of which, though scarce ever permitted into his company, he invited me to use his grounds, in shooting or coursing, and his library for reading; you know how very pleasant, nay, how dear, those privileges were to me; well, Sir; yesterday, just before your most painful intimation, I received from the Count this note:" he produced one, and read aloud, as follows:—

"Count O'Ruark was very happy to have thrown open his house to Mr. Redmond Redmond, as a slight return for the personal service received at Mr. Redmond's hands, so long as he remained ignorant that a certain imputation had been thrown upon Mr. Redmond's birth—which imputation—(for Count O'Ruark is a plain dealing man,)—it will be well to remove before Mr. Redmond again makes his compliments to any of the family at Pleasant-view."

After reading this note, both remained silent a moment.

"Whatever the old misanthrope has heard," at length resumed Mr. Pratt, "must be a false and weak rumour: for, as I before told you, Redmond, no second person alive, that I know of, except myself, could have circulated the truth; and if I refuse to satisfy you on the subject, it is pretty evident I am not likely to satisfy others."

"I did not mean, Sir, to accuse you of being the author of this report, whatever it is; I could not mean so; but thus, you see, the case stands: without your concurrence or knowledge, an undefined slur is cast upon me; the real history of my birth and parentage would at once enable me to crush the slander—I am assured it would—the blood that runs to throb full at my heart when I speak the word, tells me as much.—Impart to me, then, that real history: I implore your assistance, Sir, as a benefit, a mercy; I ask it as an act of humane justice."

"Are you sure, Redmond, my compliance would enable you to accomplish your purpose?"

"Heaven and earth, Sir! that means it would not—it confirms the Count's note—it gives authority for other slights—sneers, whispers, and winks, which, from to time, I have encountered, particularly in that paltry village, yonder;—it says, you too believe I am the son of a degraded man!—does it, Mr. Pratt, does it?"—the dark side of his temper again lowered out, and again he advanced, frowning and threatening.

"Redmond, I shall never answer another query on the present subject."

"Answer this then!" cried Redmond, snatching out of his bosom the fragment of another letter,—"but first, Sir, let me remind you of a few things. Your excellent wife, Mrs. Pratt, has now been dead about two years, as I reckon."

"About two years," muttered the other, his side-long look trying to fix the scrawl that Redmond kept closed in his grasp.

"And you were in Dublin when she died in this house, Sir?"

A cold assent was given.

"And received letters from her, while in Dublin, written upon her death-bed, in this house?"

"What can you mean, Sir?" advancing upon him. "What! have you been spying and pillaging among my papers, youngster?"

"Spying and pillaging, Mr. Pratt!—Sir, this is new phraseology, indeed, from your lips, your guard-

ed, prudent, and bland lips,—quite a new view of your character——"

"Puppy, cur—give me that paper!" cried Mr. Pratt, suddenly stamping his way to him, while his eyes flashed and his lips quivered.

"Are you really so anxious to possess it, Sir? And does its sight make you so pale and tremulous? You cannot get it yet, however, until you hear—first, how it came into my possession—next, 'till you hear me read it. I did not spy among your papers, Mr. Pratt; I did not—(how proudly and contemptuously my nature repels the charge—)"

"It need not, however, quite so proudly," interrupted the elder, now restored to his self-possession.

"Explain your meaning there, Sir!—explain, this moment!"

"Tut, silly boy," turning from him as he advanced, and taking a chair.

"Well, Sir, then hear me go on. This scrap of a letter I found, but a few hours ago, near to where you had been sitting to your escritoire, in the parlour. I picked it up, to place it out of the hands of the servants; in doing so, my own name—the name you have chosen to give me, I should rather say—struck my eye, in your wife's handwriting; a natural and, I hope, excusable curiosity prompted me to run over the lines, and then I read what I now read to you: 'tis but a part of a letter, Sir, and seems the conclusion of one;—there is no clue to the first few words, which, however, are 'could have died in poverty, much happier;' but afterwards, Sir, we have an almost unbroken sentence.—'Yes, Joshua, on my death-bed, and about to face my God, nothing distresses my soul but the wrong done to this poor Redmond: my only hope and comfort is, that while you live you will be a father to him, and, ere you find yourself in my present situation, insure to him, by a legal act, all that you believe to be his right: perhaps Heaven would allow another mode of arrangement, without injury to our own child; perhaps she and he———' here, Sir, the scrap ends; now, can you explain it? Now, will you yield me the satisfaction I have hitherto vainly begged for?"

"I believe, indeed, I must, Redmond, though for your own sake, I wish this necessity had not occurred for doing so: the prospect of being compelled to answer your questions, when just now I saw the paper in your hands, threw me off my guard, and, I can assure you, exclusively on account of your individual interests, caused me to express myself in a manner I must regret. But come; let us to the point, at last; my confession now becomes indispensable in order to protect my own character from suspicions that your hasty interpretation of the lines may render probable; wait here a moment; I will instantly return."

He took a light; left the dining-room with a composed step; entered the parlour, and soon returned, holding a torn letter in his hand.

"To give you full satisfaction, Redmond, let us first read the whole of the letter, of which that scrap is a part; ay, here it is; pray, just lay your *morceau* to this torn edge, that we may judge if any words are missing on either side."

Redmond, allowing this request, stepped to the table, and applied his slip to the torn letter; and, while in the act of doing so, Mr. Pratt suddenly snatched it from between his fingers, and flung it into the blazing chimney, where, in a second, it was ashes, saying—"There, good Redmond—I beg your pardon—but that is the most charitable way to settle the question."

The young man stood fixed in consternation. Surprise at such an act from a man whose character, until within a few days past, he had from childhood respected, tended, as much as his feelings with regard to himself, to keep him some moments silent. But he at length found words.

"Well, Mr. Pratt; now, at least, I believe you have reasons, other than those yielded to me, for your caution. Now, Sir, I firmly believe you have slandered the memory of my unknown father; and, to quote your wife's dying words, wronged my father's son."

"Don't be a fool, Redmond; think and believe what

you like, but keep respectful language. You are dependant upon me."

"I can keep no respectful language for the man whose assertions and character I have proof are false and dishonourable; and I am not dependant upon you, Sir. Passing your story of a thousand pounds given to you, for my education and so forth, I am convinced I am not your debtor, so far: lest I should be, in future, we part—part this moment, and for ever.——"

"Insolent fool!—be not as rash as you are ungrateful and saucy.—Part? why, where would you go? where, except to enlist with Cushneiche, on the mountains?"

"Wherever I go, it shall be from under a roof that, in honour and with a due respect for myself, should no longer shelter me."

"Though after all your fine proud blood, Master Redmond, it may be hail-fellow-well-met, between ye," muttered Mr. Pratt, as if only following up his own last speech.

"What do you say, there again, Sir? what dreadful and mysterious insult dare you insinuate?"

"Dare?"

"Yes, Sir, dare—" He stepped forward; Mr. Pratt rose to ring the bell—"But spare yourself any apprehension, Sir; I despise to repeat the word; we part, I say; some other evidences of my father's identity may, perhaps, be found, notwithstanding your stories, Mr. Pratt."

"Silly fellow, stay where you are: when you discover—if you ever can—who and what that father was, you may congratulate yourself but little on your success."

"Hell and devils!" exclaimed Redmond, seizing him, "you shall tell me that who and what before I leave you."

"Madman, let me go, or take the consequence in an answer that will curse you."

"I will not!—speak away!—let me be curst, if I am to be so—speak, Sir!"

"Hearken, then—" as the young man began to treat

him rudely, "your father was, I believe, a common robber, and died, I hope, at the hands of the law."

The doleful scream of a man's voice, bursting from Redmond, instantly echoed through the house; and, a moment after, the young man had broke away from Mr. Pratt, flinging him some yards distant, and was bounding down the avenue, night and storm, as black and vehement as his own passion, gathering around his path.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Pratt stood pale and shaking after the agitation, and, indeed, the violence he had undergone, when, as if summoned by the cry that, as has been said, rung through the mansion, a light figure of a girl, dressed in white muslin, glided to the open parlour door, and there checking herself, stood with clasped hands, looking in upon him. Almost at the same moment, another person, a tall, middle-aged man, clothed in shabby black, and having a flaming red face, and vulgar features, appeared behind her, easily peeping over the girl's shoulders, and also directing his glances, —which, as any one might suppose, were filled with a simple, honest anxiety—towards Mr. Pratt. At the first sound of their approach, that gentleman roused himself; with a quick step walked to the door, and, as he took the young lady's hand to lead her in, said to her companion—

"After him, Cotteril; follow the silly boy, and bring him back instantly." Cotteril, with an expression of great devotion, and as if his simple nature was half convinced of the importance of his commission, was moving off. "Stop; tell him I forgive all his rudeness and insult, and promise him a full explanation, if he will but return this moment;—tell him, too, that what I last said is not to be minded; that he com-

pelled me to say something as a punishment for his intemperance;—quick, Bill — and harkee" — he quitted his fair charge a moment, who instantly sank into a chair; stepped out to Cotteril, whispered two or three sentences, which the man met by his usual affectation of good-nature and simplicity, and then closing one eye leisurely, as a token of comprehension, he plodded away. Mr. Pratt took a seat by the girl's side,— "Now, what is the reason of this Ellen?" he began; —"you know such agitation is as dangerous to you as it is indelicate."

"Father," she answered, trembling, and looking as white as her floating dress, "could I have helped it? after getting my wretched secret from me, as, by kindness and commands together, you have done, would you expect me to remain up stairs, alone, and uninformed about him and you, when I heard his terrible outcry, and saw him, from my window, rushing down the avenue?—Oh, Sir, what has happened?—Where has he gone at this time of night!"

"Well, my dear child," taking her hand, "I should not have been so surprised at your appearance, but I forgot a little; my temper and nerves were shaken; and nothing of importance has happened. You know Redmond is hasty at times, when his dark nature sends out a flash; and while I was again urging him to exert himself in the way that his time of life now makes imperative, he answered me sullenly, and, as I thought, disrespectfully. I retorted, which I should not have done; he quite lost his self-command; very harsh language ensued between us; and at last he left the house in a fit of independence, I suppose; and that's all. Don't look so frightened, Ellen: Cotteril will soon bring him back; I am ready to forgive him, and the morning will see us as happy as ever."

"God send it, Sir," was her only reply, except that showers of tears now relieved her previous terror.

"Yes, my love, all shall go on well; nothing shall harm our poor Redmond, silly and thoughtless as he is; for your sake I can pardon him a worse extravagance; so, cheer up, Nelly, cheer up."

"Sir," after a pause, and trying to check her tears, "your goodness to him—to us both—is not the only thing required for my happiness—I believe, I fear it is not."

"Then, only tell me what else."

"And I begin to think—oh, Sir, I am sure—that I ought, if I regard my own respectability—to say nothing of my peace of mind—endeavour—to—" fresh tears followed.

"To what, my child? speak up plainly to your father, as you have ever done; it will be best for all parties. Did your dear mother live, I should never think of winning or desiring your confidence on so delicate a subject; but lonely and—but for each other—companionless as we stand in the world, our hearts ought to be fully shared together; speak, Ellen, and you will find me try, with a woman's delicacy, joined to a father's interest, to fill your mother's place. Come, now, what would you tell me?"

"What I am ashamed and humiliated, as well as choked, to tell, Sir—what, girl and lady as I am, I ought to die sooner than acknowledge with one tear; yet they will come. Oh, Sir, after all your kindness, indulgence, and encouragement to my foolish feelings, Redmond does not love, does not care for your poor Ellen."

"Pho, child, is that all? Come, I know better; I have experience in affairs of the heart, among men at least, and, from my observation of the boy, you tell an idle story. Do you think, Ellen, I should have encouraged feelings that (tender and delicate as your constitution is) must, if disappointed, injure you, unless I became assured of Redmond's inclinations? This much you may have observed. From a sense of what he supposes a dependant situation, working on a proud and, sometimes, a dark heart, but certainly a noble nature, the lad endeavours, no doubt, to hide his sentiments: he must not aspire, he thinks, to the child of his benefactor, and of a man high in the world; but, let him alone; we shall find means, without compromising your dignity, my love, to give him more confidence."

"I think little, Sir, of such appearances as you scribe; I have never seen them, or they escaped remark; that is not it at all; Redmond loves an lady."

"Absurd, Ellen; the ravings of some of the tortures of a sweet girl's first love. What other? lady? he is not even acquainted with another: w can you mean?"

"Miss D'Arnell, the foreign lady at Ple View."

"Why, he does not know her, or scarcely k her; they may, indeed, have met in the library o old eccentric Count, or on her walks, but coul have exchanged a word together: she is always at ed by her *bonne*, her governess, her duenna, know; and then she is so high, so lofty; you yourself, told me so; he durst not have thoug her."

"He loves, father—I cannot be deceived in every thing he says or does, for the last year, as me; he loves—and not Ellen."

"My dear Nelly, 'tis a mistake; Redmond not in his nature to be an inconstant, and you how truly he has sighed for you since you children."

"I thought so; but now believe I have been taken."

"What! not credit his own words? Has he not whispered it, my child?"

"Never, since we were children, almost. Oh we grew up in a sad mistake together. The serv your friends, nay, Sir, yourself taught us, by si words—silly ones—such as I am ashamed that member—to consider ourselves, even when infan —'tis foolish indeed, yet I do remember it—as cular friends. After that, while we read, and lea and rode, and ran about together, mere boy and he used to repeat the absurd phrases he had heard I—for I believe, girls know soonest the meani such words—I thought more of them than Redn But never, since his parting for college at fifteen, did he repeat this kind of nonsense."

"No, love; because, upon his return, he had learned to think a little, and his respect and awe checked his former little freedoms."

"Because he had learned to think, Sir, I know; think, and correct his childish error. Do not tell me, dear father; had he loved under the deepest disguise of reserve, I must have seen it; for, I blush to tell you, Sir, I watched him closely; through fear, awe, indifference, coldness, I had surely found out his love for me. No, Sir; kind, tender of my weak state of health, and frank and friendly as a brother, Redmond has been ever since,—nothing more. Nothing more, until within the last year, when, after the Count invited him to Pleasant View, he met Miss D'Arnell—and oh, father, he could not help adoring her! She and I have saluted each other, and spoken an occasional word, upon our chance meetings in the cabins of one or two of your poor tenants; and this much I will allow—she is a queen, a goddess! I allow more—she is better suited, by nature and natural qualities of mind, if not of heart, to win and meet Redmond's high spirits, than your poor, weak, trembling Ellen." As she again wept, her head fell on her father's shoulder.

At this moment, as he was about farther to reply, the red face and tall awkward figure of Cotteril reappeared at the parlour door; Mr. Pratt removed her head, rose up, and, perceiving the man alone, faced him with his back to Ellen, and gave him a significant wink as he demanded an account of his mission.

"All sthraight an' fair, Sir, as a body might say, afther a manner," replied Cotteril, speaking, as the neighbours termed it, in the utmost *lauchiness** of accent, as he returned his master's signal: "I seen the young masther, as your honour bid me, an' discoorsed him too, the poor young slob, an' never fear him, but he'll be here in a jiffy; only he tould me to say that, as it was so late, he'd take a bed in the village for the rest o' the night, an' see your honour, an' Miss Nelly, God bless her, at the tey an' toast, in the mornin'."

* This word has many meanings—one of them good-nature.

"There, love, you hear that," said Mr. Pratt, re-approaching his daughter, and again taking her hand; "and come, now, and let me lead you towards your chamber; you require sleep and rest, Ellen."

"I do indeed, father," as she rose to walk out at the door—"but will sleep and rest come when they are most wanted, Sir?"

"Ellen," resumed her father, stopping to speak in an earnest whisper, in the passage, "you know that while I love you as tenderly as ever a widowed father loved an orphan child, I am a man of some sense, and understand what I say before I say it; therefore attend to me; this boy loves you, notwithstanding all your whims, and, if you have no great objection, shall make you his wife. Good night, my love, and go dream of him." He motioned to kiss her cheek, and Ellen meekly held out her pale but beautiful one for her father's salute, as, with a sigh drawn from the depths of her heart, she merely said—"Good night, Sir."

Mr. Pratt listened until he heard her light and languid step enter her chamber; then he walked back into the parlour, cautiously shut the door, with a pompous and heavy stride passed Cotteril, whose ricketty length was drawn up against the wall, in the corner; flung himself into a chair, and bending his brows till they almost hid his fish-shaped grey eyes, asked,

"Well, Sir, he would not come with you, nor have you seen him?"

"It was not all a sham story, your honour: I seen him, sure enough, but hadn't the speech of him somehow or someway; and afore I could have it, another came across him, and they turned out o' my sighth, together."

"Who was that person?

"Maybe your honour could throw a guess at him?"

Turning a piece of tobacco in his mouth and stopping to deposit some of its distillation under the grate, Mr. Cotteril advanced across the room in his own peculiar pace. While carrying his person along, he rested upon one leg the whole weight of his body, then dwelt upon that leg, before he put the other in motion,

as if there existed a necessity to use due consideration between every step, or a fear that one innocent limb might bring its fellow into a scrape; and, perhaps upon something of the same principle, he always seemed pondering as he went forward, his eyes generally cast down; which habit, together with the constant stirring of his long under jaw, gave him the appearance of a poor harmless kine, in a cogitative mood. At the least word addressed to him, no matter by whom, he would, however, half elevate his regards, and send them round, with a semblance, at least, of great good-will to every person and every thing they fell upon; and his way of returning the slightest salute was bland and innocent in the extreme.

"If I could guess," answered his master to his question, "why should I inquire of you?"

"Why, then, it's a thing I'm apt to think, Sir, you'd be like enough to make three or four offers afore you'd hit on id."

Mr. Cotteril, having said so much, drew a chair in a sneaking way to the fire, to make himself quite at home during the conference that was to take place; again emitted some of his distilled tobacco under the grate, and setting his side to the blaze, extended the fingers of his right hand, in the way that the action may be observed to be performed by a pleased cat, in nearly the same situation; while, with a switch he held in his left hand, and which was a general appendage to his equipment, he described semicircles on the carpet as he talked. Persons of consideration are occasionally obliged to tolerate such familiarity from their confidants.

"Some way, or some how," he went on, "it cums about by chance, or by good-loock, or somethin' o' the sort, that when I'm bent on goin' any where, to do any thing, by day or by night, there's a knack sarves my turn to send me the right road, masther."

He stopped a moment for "the masther's" assent to this proposition.

"Yes; go on," said Mr. Pratt.

"The same thing, afther a manner, happened to me

this bout, Sir. Makin' my way wid a hearty good will, for the rason that I was on your honour's arrand, I sthrikes up the hill-road, that sarves by way of a short cut to the village;—an' I was a passin' by Breedge Sheehy's cabin, about half way to the top o' the hill—a hard-workin' ould woman is the same Breedge, Sir; given to industhry; an' she does have a little bottle behind the noggins on the dhresser for a friend; it's the widow o' Dan Sheehy that they hanged, people say wrongfully enough—you'd know the cabin, Sir, I'd make free to think?"

"Yes; it stands the nearest to the wild spot of ground on the summit of the hill."

"So it does, your honour. Well, just as I was a turnin' the gable o' the house, I hears somebody or other breaking through the loose stones and furze, at my right hand undher me, on the slope o' the same hill, comin' up, like enough, from the other road, the smooth carriage road, that runs all round the hill, to the village, too; an' as the step was in a hurry, I had my own rasons for hidin' to let it pass me by; an' the man jumped across the little rough road, an' never cried stop, bud made for the very place your honour spakes of, on the crown o' the hill entirely: an' sure, it was our own poor slob, Masther Redmond, an' nobody else; running like the hunted hare, only no one huntin' him, barrin' himself, I'm thinkin'."

"Well, you followed him?"

"Faicks an' I did so, your honour; bud wid a little caution, afther a manner, just to thry an' see what he was goin' to do wid his poor bones in sich a place as that; an' I'm well behouldin' to the part I tuck, any how; maybe it makes the rason why Bill Cottheril is to the fore to tell your honour the quare things that cum about; for when I stole, ever so asy, round an' round the bit o' waste ground, I hard his voice high wid another man, afore I seen either iv 'em; an' when I did get the first sighth o' the both, musha, never a mind I had to go nearer; an' afther a mortial spell o' the talk, in the wind an' the dhrizzle, the man an' he turned farther off, an' I never seen 'em since."

"And now, who was that man, Cotteril?"

Mr. Cotterill allowed lengthened vent to a fresh stream of tobacco-juice, spread his fingers wider asunder at the blaze, and gave his switch another sweep on the carpet ere he added—

"It was Cushneiche, the robber."

Mr. Pratt stared at him.

"Nonsense, man; you are mistaken."

"Maybe I am, masther; bud tho' I'm no great witch of a man, all out, entirely, some how or other, I'll make bould to say that maybe I'm not mistaken, as well as maybe I am. Maybe it's myself hasn't the eye-sight good enough to see him; an' maybe I have no right to know Masther Cushneiche, if I did see him; maybe nothin' happened, and maybe I didn't tell your honour iv id afore, the night o' the day when we war forced to cant an' dhrive the Meehans, poor sowls—(a kind o' thing, I may make bould to say, is agin our nature, only, your honour knows, we must do it to get our own)—an' when I was comin' along home, quite an' asy, as my way is, maybe he didn't step up to me on the road, and grope the poor pockets, an' dhraw out the day's money, tellin' me in the jibin' way he has, it was done to save my thigh from bein' galded wid the load: an' then what does he do bud tear the decrees we had agin the Dooleys, into bits the size o' my nail; an' when all was over, the blunderbush held to my jaw, that had a mouth to id, aye, by Gar, the size iv a barrel pot, while he forced me, in the civil way I had, as he told me, to give him my hearty thanks for his trouble, all the same, afther a manner, as if it war gold he war afther givin' to me, not to talk iv takin' it from me;—yis; maybe, somehow or someway, I had no rason at all to know him."

"You are quite certain then?"

"As sart'n, your honour, as that I feel the fire, (the Lord purlong id) burnin my hine-quarters here."

"Were you able to hear their conversation?"

"That's the only bite that cum on us, yet, Sir. No, Sir; never a word could I hear, tho' I cocked the two rasonably good ears I have, as stiff as the filly in the

stable, when the gorçoon is settlin' his oats in the siv' for him;—it's not to be denied, any how, that I didn't go as near to them as a body might go, afther a manner, if a body hadn't a rason for keepin' a civil distance somehow; an' it's as likely that I did go near enough too, for hearin' o' what they said, only, some way or some how, the wind was tattherin' an' tearin' on the top o' the place, an' dhrivin' their words twenty ways at a time, so that there was little use in listenin'; maybe afore I cum up there might be a sort of a kind of a misundherstandin' betuxt 'em, by rason that I jist caught their voices higher at the first goin' off, nor afther; but when they turned farther over the hill, in a thrack I had no mind to folly 'em on, an' left my sighth, at the same time, it was all like born brothers, one to another, I'm thinkin'."

"It is very surprising," said Mr. Pratt.

"An' that same thought, Sir," continued Mr. Cotteril, "set me upon bringin' to mind the ould saying—'Birds of a feather flock together;' it had the face upon it, someway or somehow, as if Masther Redmond was takin' to his new ways, by coorse o' nature; an, by Gar, Bill Cottheril, says I, spakin' asy and quite to myself, it might happen, Bill, you war tellin' the thruth, unknownst to yourself the day afore yisther-day, when you war goin' on, afther the masther's ordhers, to put it upon the ould Count's sarvants, an' other honest people in the village down there, as to how the gorçoon war pedigreed, an' the sort of a breed he sprung from."

"You have no right, Cotteril, to assume the rare credit of having told truth on that single occasion; I informed you that I wished to get the rumour circulated, myself standing clear of it, for a certain purpose; a domestic one; which I believe you guess."

"Yis, Sir, may be I do; God bless your honour, that laves such a thing in poor Bill Cottheril's hands to put the guess on; yis, the darlin' young misthress, the Lord be good to her, every day she gets up! an' that *dhawn ordha** iv a Frinch lady, comin' here for to go

* A high or conceited person.

to take the likin' iv our poor slob iv a boy from Miss Nelly to herself, Sir;"—he arose from his seat at the fire, advanced his long wriggling body towards "the Masther," changed the switch from the left to the right hand, and continued close by the table to which Mr. Pratt sat; "Yis, Sir, to be sure; bud—" suddenly dropping his left elbow on the table, and bending one leg, and stretching out the other, while his face assumed the placid simplicity which it usually wore when speaking to strangers on Mr. Pratt's concerns, and of which it could not now divest itself to Mr. Pratt himself, although they knew each other tolerably well—"It's a thing, somehow or someway, that, if it wouldn't be makin' too bould, entirely—he!—ha!"—we cannot come nearer to the orthography of these two self-interrupting ejaculations, which broke from him, half sigh, half grunt, as he stretched forward his arm, and, with the point of his switch, endeavoured to reach a bit of straw that his own brogues had smuggled into the room —"too bould, entirely," he resumed, "to ax your honour the rason that's in id—" another pause, in another energetic effort to reach the straw, which a looker-on might suppose to be the chief object of his desires—"if it's such a thing as that your honour is downright in arnest about, afther a manner, to let the gorçoon make up to Miss Nelly, good fort'n be in her road—why you'd be sendin' a body to whisper them quare stories about him?" And the last words seemed to escape merely as if they slipped from him in his repeated efforts to reach the straw, which, as they were uttered, he at last succeeded in twitching from its place.

"I'll satisfy you on that point, honest Bill, for I am aware it does seem rather strange," replied Mr. Pratt, scarce able to keep in a contemptuous smile at the play of face and tongue that assailed him; "and my answer involves some delicate family matters; yet, as I know you to be an old and long-tried friend of the family, I can fear little from giving you my confidence."

"Faicks, yis; your honour knows poor Bill Cottheril is loyal to the back-bone."

"Indeed, Bill, I believe so; and therefore willingly answer the question you have just put.

"Long before I could, from observation, interpose my authority to prevent it, Redmond had, by constant assiduity, won the affections of Miss Pratt."

"Oh, the thief o' the world; what impedince he had to do sich a thing, Sir."

"On account of the great indulgence with which I treated the boy, she was not on her guard against him, particularly after his last return from College, when he came to us certainly an intelligent, well-mannered, and, in his person, a fine young man; and so, Cotteril, Miss Pratt's tender nature at last fully owned his merits and attentions."

"Musha, the poor crature; the poor young misthress, Sir;—an' Miss Nelly owned it, Sir?"

"But, as you before rightly conjectured, Master Redmond soon after met the strange lady at the Count's, and his love and his professions were forgotten."

"Oh, the young thief, I say again, Sir—I wish we had a hoult of him, a second time, your honour, jest for his good."

"You know the delicate state of your young lady's health; you know my apprehensions about it, and my great affection for her;—you know the anxiety that, as a father, I must feel upon the subject; and therefore, Cotteril, you will understand why I instructed you to whisper such rumours as, upon reaching the old Count's ear, would be likely to put an end to Mr. Redmond's visits at Pleasant-view."

"Avoch, I do undherstand, Sir;—musha yis; if the poor young misthress hard tell of it, it would go nigh to break the heart in her body, Sir."

"That's precisely what I wish to prevent. I hope to bring back, by any means—you mind me, Cotteril—by any means—this young lad to his most honourable line of conduct, before Miss Pratt knows that she has been slighted, deserted, and insulted."

"Musha, to be sure, Sir; an' why not, God purlong her days, an' look down on her; an', by any manes at all your honour says, afther a manner, somehow?"

"Yes, Cotteril."

"Why then, yis, wid all my heart, Sir; only, afther a manner, we don't *fusthaun*,* your honour, out-an-out, entirely."

"If what is already done has no effect, it will be necessary to get him into our power, Bill."

"Faiks, so it will, Sir; your honour jest said it."

Cotteril smilingly waited to hear a speedy explanation of "the Masther's" plan for getting Redmond, as he had said, into his power; but, rather to his disappointment, Mr. Pratt was, for some time, silent; and when at last he resumed, honest Bill did not immediately see the drift or connexion of the new with the former topic.

"This Cushneiche, Bill——"

"Yis, Sir; this bad boy of a Cushneiche."

"How long before I last returned from Dublin had the fellow been in the country? only a few weeks, I think you have said."

Cotteril acquiesced.

"And from all you can learn, he is not a native of these parts?"

"Neither he nor his next in command, Sir, the Yallow Sailor, as they calls him; nor like the boys, o' the country, either, though many's the bouchal about the place is listed wid em, people say, since they cum among us, somehow or someway; only Cushneiche himself, sometimes dhresses like one kind o' body, sometimes like another, an' is never known to look the laste resemblin' a labourin' man, as the others do afther a manner; an' the Yallow Sailor always wears his blue jacket, more betoken the tallow face he's called afther."

"They do not rob poor and rich, indiscriminately?"

"So far from it, your honour, that, when the fit takes Cushneiche, he'll give to a poor man what he borrowed from a rich one; an' then their friends, Sir, the country round; their recaivers, an' them that hides 'em, and gives 'em help at a pinch; faiks I hear there's

* Comprehend.

some cabins we wouldn't s'pect for it that goes on wid thricks o' the kind, Sir."

"But I suspect them, Cotteril; and, perhaps, between us we know as much of the gentlemen altogether, as will make sure of them one of those days."

"Wid God's help, Sir: tho' faiks, your honour, we'd want such help when it's agin the red divil we must fight, that gets Cushneiche out o'more scrapes than an ould eel that 'ud be slippin' thro' the dhrag-net, night afther night, the year round."

"No matter, he may be hauled up at last. Now, Cotteril, you are sure Mr. Redmond has joined this highway robber; you saw them meet and walk off together, quietly and confidentially?" His cabinet minister assented. "And you are ready to say as much to your neighbours to-morrow morning, so that the good people of the country may soon hear it; and you are ready to swear it too before any magistrate in the land—all without having it understood that I know a word of the matter?"

Cotteril answered that, for an "honest, quite, aisy man," no creature alive was more ready and willing to "down with an honest oath," at any time, in his honour's service.

"Then you know what you are to do the very first thing in the morning, Bill; and so drink this tumbler of wine—and good night to you, Cotteril."

With prayers for the long life and welfare of his honour and the whole family, Mr. Cotteril speedily obeyed this command, and then put himself in motion to take his ill-constructed and shuffling figure out of the room. As he gained the door, he hesitated, stopped, and said—"Good night an' a pleasant sleep to your honour; but, musha, Sir—I ax pardon—but what's to be done wid the darlin' young misthress, God keep her, in regard o' the young masther not comin' home to the tay an' toast in the mornin', as I tould her?"

"Leave that to me, Bill; you have nothing to do with it; only go to your bed."

"Oh! sorrow a thing, Sir, sure enough; an' it's to your honour's self we'll lave it; an' why not? A good

it, Sir, an' the Lord reward you, and be good to
." He scraped himself out of the room, his face
simplicity and good nature; yet, ere he turned down
kitchen stairs to the servants' apartment, stopped
e more, and added—"But my sowl to glory, if
self thinks the masther is outright as open wid me
his little business as he believes I think he is; an'
on't find it in my heart, for all he says, wid his own
oth tongue, somehow, to be satisfied on the head o'
itin' to marry that gorcoon to the young misthress
half hangin' him afore hand: no matther; he always
ever had the two ways in him, and yet they sel-
n or never bamboozled poor Bill Cottheril, ather;
may be, by a little watchin', an keeping our toe in
brogue, an' our own tongue in our cheek, the
wouldn't be sthruck all his own way this hayt
her."

Mr. Pratt remained sitting alone in the dining-room
g after his departure: at length he rose up, with a
vy, care-freighted sigh, and getting a light, pro-
ded to his library. There he took down a volume
statutes, and opening it at a page to which a mark
viously placed in the book at once directed him,
d over, very studiously, a particular statute; then
sed the volume; with his hand laid upon its cover,
ained in deep thought; in some time, roused him-
; returned the book to its shelf, carefully adjust-
; the mark; gained his sleeping chamber; locked
door; walked into a closet; opened a strong box;
k out a parchment deed; conned it over, also;
elt, again and again, on its date, in the manner of
who sought to indulge certainty rather than in any
ree to attain it; and, finally, the point of his re-
tions escaped him in this short and whispered soli-
uy—"Yes, he shall make her his wife, if the pros-
ct of the gallows itself can induce him. I know he
es not love her, and Ellen need not have told me;
t no matter; Redmond shall marry her."

CHAPTER IV.

THE day for attending to the invitation of Darby Roach and his son arrived, and Mr. Pratt and Ellen prepared to go to Mickle Tobin's house. All guests were expected by six o'clock in the evening; and as the small farmer, Tobin, lived some miles beyond the village, while Mr. Pratt's mansion lay about the same distance from it, in an opposite direction, it was necessary to be on horseback by five at least, particularly as they should, at that hour, have the last light of a February evening, and escape, in its company, all chance of a meeting with Cushneiche, or any of his subjects. For the purpose of providing against his intrusion on the way home, Mr. Pratt left orders with Cotterill to call for him at the place of nuptials, about eleven o'clock, attended by a number of men, well-armed.

In order that his daughter might bear him company on the present festive occasion, Mr. Pratt had well justified his claim, expressed when the reader last found him and Cotteril confidentially discoursing, to have the arrangement of the question of Redmond's absence left entirely to himself. In fact, he had seriously informed Ellen, that after an early interview between the youth and him, the morning subsequent to his sudden flight from the house, Redmond consented to depart immediately for Dublin, to complete his college course, in consequence of having previously disclosed his passion for Ellen, and received an approbation, provided he should betake himself to studies he had long neglected, and not attempt to see her until a stipulated time. His period of probation would, however, be but a short one; only a few months in fact: and, when it had expired, Ellen might be prepared to see a fervent lover at her feet.

The girl had no reason or inclination to disbelieve her father's word; the truth of this statement she did not, therefore, doubt; and yet she heard it with that languid acquiescence of the heart which comes from a

boding of disappointment. It never occurred to to question the facts so stated; but she could not Redmond before her imagination as a lover.

Meantime, while Cotteril, at his master's instance, ely whispered a very contrary account of the situ- n of Redmond, Mr. Pratt studiously arranged to p the shocking story from his daughter's ear. That, rding to hopes and plans he had formed, this gen- an reckoned to place her lover under her eyes, in light and within the time he spoke of, is certain, therefore, and if for no reason but to guard his own w of consistency, he would have taken this precau- : but there was another reason; and, although with scarcely a more potent, yet a more amiable one; he lly loved his gentle and drooping daughter; his s for her health were lively and continual; and n had there been no policy in the case, assuredly would have striven to keep her from the knowledge a story which, whether true or false, must deeply bitter, if it did not endanger her life.

After making his fabulous communication, he exert- himself too in every way, to cheer her mind and y her spirits; and, as part of his efforts in this view, tly insisted, against her repeated though unusual ections, that Ellen should accompany him to their unt's wedding. Even here Mr. Pratt had a double ive. He wished to stand well with the world, , as a first step, with his tenantry; that is, with every of them from whom a tolerably regular discharge rent might be expected. While the poor and un- unate, and of course the irregular portion of his ottiers" and small farmers were driven, and dis- ned, and ejected, without ceremony—(Mr. Cotte- as has been gathered from his own personal eulogy, chief agent on all such occasions)—the prosperous thriving portion experienced smiles and urbanity n their landlord. He would salute them kindly; with them in a good-natured tone; give ear to ir little wants, of that description which it cost him hing to alleviate; decide all their knotty law-points, h the more authority, assumed and acknowledged,

because they knew he had once been "a counsellor;" and, above all, Mr. Pratt wished to get credit for the patriarchal condescension of mingling in their domestic festivities, at wedding, or christening, so that those who duly paid their arrears might never have it in their power or be disposed to call him "hard," or "an upstart." And aware that, to procure the good word of any family, it is advisable to win over the female members, Mr. Pratt, on all these accounts, encouraged his daughter in her own voluntary wish of making happy the humble people around her, whether by assisting them, obliging them, or mixing with them; and hence, apart from his sincere anxiety to cheer Ellen by a kind of scene he knew she enjoyed, he now insisted, notwithstanding her unusual objection on the score of unusual bad spirits, upon having her company to the Tobins.

There were, too, other little helping motives; for Mr. Pratt was not a man to do any thing without well understanding why and wherefore, and nicely dividing every cause to action. Darby Roach had informed him that Miss D'Arnell might be at the wedding; and, first, he wished to observe closely the lady who, at present, seemed to stand between him and a favourite object; second, he had heard she was proud and lofty, and not likely to be a favourite with the common people, while his daughter Ellen was mild and bending, and beloved by them, far and wide, and he was anxious to have the young ladies contrasted, that Ellen might bear away all the good-will, part of which must naturally extend to himself; next, he would fain observe if Cotteril's report of Redmond's present fate had reached Miss D'Arnell, and, if so, what effect it was likely to produce upon her; and from that effect, whether or no the lady loved his protégé; and lastly—though, perhaps, we should not say lastly—he wanted to avail himself of something like a public occasion to express certain opinions touching the conduct of the boy, and his own asserted feelings towards him.

A river flowed between Mr. Pratt's house and the village through which he must pass to the place of fes-

tivity: after riding about two miles along the road that ran parallel to this river, he and Ellen had to turn to the right over the bridge which led into the village; and when about half way across, they commanded an uninterrupted view of the principal street, running before them in a continued line, against a steep and rugged ascent that was still to be their way to Tobin's house.

They had emerged, slowly walking their horses, upon the bridge, when a poor, wretched looking man, whom both seemed with some interest to recognize, passed them from behind, at a good pace. He was about fifty years old, tall, bare-headed, with his profuse and sunburnt brown hair matted, and falling down in strings, until it met a tangled beard, which touched his breast; his body was covered with what can be called nothing but a bundled patch-work of rags, of different colours, rudely stitched together, and often laid, piece after piece, over each other; and this covering descended to his knees, and was girt round his waist with a hay-rope, denominated in Ireland "suggaun;" a small-clothes of similar construction peeped from beneath it; his legs and feet were bare. Under his left arm he tucked a little bundle of twigs, dried potatoe-stalks, and a few straws, securely tied up with another "suggaun," which, again, the Irish peasant would call his "*bresna*," or day's gathering for the evening's fire; with the hand of the same arm he held, over his shoulder, the neck of a wallet, which hung, half filled, at his back, and with the other grasped a long, knotty, polished walking-staff. Thus, at a first view, the poor man might only present an appearance of mendicant misery and squalidness, and attract no particular notice distinct from the various other sets of vagrant beggars, who, before and behind him, shuffled along towards the rendezvous of good living for the day, namely, Mickle Tobin's house; but if one looked a second time at him, or observantly contrasted him with his seeming brethren, some peculiar character was visible. Although his eye dwelt immovably on the ground; although long past his prime

of bodily strength; and, as has been noticed, although laden with the wallet, he walked perfectly upright—not even his head or neck following the downcast and fixed habit of his glance; his brow was commanding, though self-abased and humbled; his nose, the only feature to be seen, of fine large mould; his bare legs, though tanned by weather, and showing some of the stringy sinuosity of approaching age, were beautifully and even delicately shaped; and his long, firm, measured tread—during which the feet turned outward in that pleasing evenness symmetry confers, and that the dancing-master would fain ensure to every pupil—conveyed a notion of native and early loftiness of nature, of which the physical impression could not yet be lost even amid accumulated misery and humiliation.

"Ah, poor *Padhre na-Moulh*, father," said Ellen, as he passed them, walking, as nearly as their horses would permit, in the middle of the bridge—"and is he, too, going to be the better of a day of feasting?"

"Peter, how do you do, to-day?" asked Mr. Pratt. No verbal answer was expected, because it was known that, whether from a natural want, or a wayward, insane, or, perhaps, religious cause, Peter never uttered a word, although he gave clear proof of hearing and understanding whatever was spoken to him;—no reply was, we say, expected from his lips, but Mr. Pratt paused, as he had often vainly done before, in hopes that the poor object would show, by some sign or action, a return to his greeting.

"The unfortunate man has not heard you, Sir," said Ellen, when no notice of the salute came from the mendicant. "How are you, Padhre?" she proceeded; willing to relieve her father (for she knew him well) of the little disappointment she thought he would feel at having his condescension go for nothing: and the moment her voice sounded in his ear, Peter stopped; drew up to let them pass; while they did so, bowed his head to his breast, two or three times, in a lowly, respectful manner, and then kneeling in the rough and miry road, moved his lips, his eyes still

down, as if in a prayer for the young lady. This result did not, however, gratify Mr. Pratt: for he felt that, as Peter was nearer to them when he spoke, than when his daughter repeated his question, the man might have answered, had he wished, in the first instance.

"Musha, Padhre, will the penance never go away?" asked the leader of a band of beggars, who, while he knelt, quickly shambled by him.

"Or the speech never come back to you, Padhre, aroon?" queried another, in a tone half pitiful, half ironical. He took no notice, either in anger or observation, of these questions.

"Bags, bags! halloo, bags!" shouted a string of village urchins, as they scampered over the bridge, applying to him a nick-name derived from his often carrying more than one wallet in his wandering excursions. Still he took no notice, not even by raising his eyes or knitting his brows, or as much as stopping the movement of his lips.

"Go home to th' ould castle, or it 'll be fallin' on all the good goold an' silver you do be always hiding in it!"—cried one of the imps, recollecting a popular rumour, one of many connected with him, that endowed poor Peter with a miserly appropriation of the results of his habits of receiving, rather than of asking, alms from the charitable.

"Go home to it, an' mend the brogues for the fairies!" cried a second, embodying in this exhortation another piece of village gossip, to the effect, that any one who had courage enough (and few, at least among the present bold speakers, had) to peep, in evening twilight, about the precincts of the old ruin, in which he had chosen to take up his residence, might see sundry pairs of dilapidated brogues and shoes, laid cunningly among the weeds and rubbish, to be taken in by Peter over night, and returned, at his hands, well pieced and patched, before the dew left the grass in the morning.

Still he remained abstracted. At last, "Halloo, hiss! tear him, Bully!"—"tear him, Barker!"—"cut the sthrings iv his bag, an' let the day's getherin o' money

out!" screamed many of the idle boys, as they accompanied their cruel commands to their various dogs, with showers of mud on the passive creature: indeed it was their custom, when they caught Peter free, in the open day-light, from the mystery and seclusion of his rather dreaded old castle, thus to revenge themselves on him for the terror and provoking discussion his name always exited at a distance.

And at last, the apathetic or humble man, showed some sense of the indignities cast upon him. He showed it, however, but slightly. While the mire descended on his bare head and ragged person, and while the barking and snarling curs ran on,—half afraid, though, like their masters—to worry him, his calm brow, and worn, sallow cheek reddened for a moment, his eye, still hidden by its lid, shot askance at the mean and vicious animals, and his sinewy hand grasped its long staff more firmly;—but the next instant, and before one of the byestanders interposed to protect him, the muscles of the hand relaxed; the brow and cheek faded back to their deep-pale hue; the eye again dropped on the ground, and, while nothing but a rolling tear gave evidence of the abiding smart of human feelings, he bowed his head upon his breast, more lowlily than when he had seemed to salute the young lady, and as if in abject submission to all the suffering he might be doomed to endure.

It was Mr. Pratt, who, at the instance of his shocked and much affected daughter, stept in between Peter and the crowd of persecuting brats and curs. With loud threats, and one or two cuts of his horsewhip, the whole pack, human and canine, were forced to desist, and run shrieking and hallooing over the bridge, still keeping up their inveterate though baffled humour, and sure of escaping at a distance, the rough treatment promised to them on the spot. But they had not gained the end of the bridge, when their anticipations of getting off with impunity met a sudden check. A large dog, of the Newfoundland species, who, it would seem, had, from some point of the high road leading to the bridge, become aware of their proceedings,

swept in amongst them, and disregarding his own currish brethren, got down the boys by twos and threes, worrying them and shaking them, with his mouth placed on their breasts, and jumping,—while their cries of terror now rose shrill,—from one to another, according as the brat he had just been punishing, and had left for a second and third, began to betray any symptoms of a wish to get up and run away. It was well for them the indignant and noble animal lacked, from extreme old age, teeth and tusks to eke out his willing mind to chastise them on this occasion, as, perhaps, his highly roused spirit might have led him to more violence than his contempt warranted. He was, indeed, for a dog, evidently very old, as the thinness of his shaggy coat at a glance intimated, and even as the result of his vehement exertions confirmed; for Mr. Pratt observed that the sudden fury which had given him an unusual vigour soon exhausted itself: he began to stagger and pant, often falling by the side of his foe in a vain effort to renew his attack: and at last, as one by one the young ragamuffins escaped, he had barely strength enough left to run, at a crippled pace, towards the spot where Padhre-na-Moulh now stood, and dropping at his feet, with low and complaining, and, it might appear, sympathizing cries, acknowledge his decrepitude to his master.

And now the terrified youngsters were making the best of their way clear off the bridge, when it seemed that Retribution had not yet emptied her vials upon them. At the narrowest part, where the bridge clumsily joined the road, their leaders suddenly stopped; fell back, throwing their rear into confusion; and, one after the other, yelled out—"Here's Daddy Clayton! Daddy Clayton! an' *Thomaus Foddhah** by the side iv him!"—"Here's Daddy Clayton, wid his crooked paw, an' Thomaus wid his long wattle!"—"Padhre-na-Moulh's fairy-men, that follys him every where he goes, an' stops wid him all night, to watch him for the good people!—They'll kill us stone dead for meddlin'

* Long Tom.

or makin' wid him! they'll spile us, an' they'll
us, so they will—murther!"

Mr. Pratt, looking down the bridge, saw the
old men spoken of. One was very much bent
withered; the other, besides answering to his epith
great height of stature, was emaciated almost
skeleton appearance; and both were clad in mend
apparel, and loaded with mendicant wallets, grea
small. Taking possession, one at either side, o
only outlet through which the boys could escape t
road, Daddy Clayton, the crippled little man, as
ing, in his pinched and shrivelled features, an ex
sion of unearthly spite and venom; and holding as
as he could the left arm, truly alluded to by the ur
as crooked, and, still higher, his good right ar
which the hand held a curved stick,—thus prep
himself, he stepped cautiously and ominously tov
them in one direction: while, from the other, Tho
brandished aloft, in both hands, the formidable we
that had also made part of their anticipations. A
first-mentioned personage continued to steal on, s
thing in the manner of a starved and prudent cat
fine herd of young mice, the despairing boys, cl
frightened by the hobgoblin motion he contrive
give his withered member, screamed aloud in ag
and ran towards the other side; but there encounte
Thomaus and his wattle, their cries rose louder
louder: they shed tears; they fell on their knees
they danced on their heels in a frenzy of terror; a
was not till Peter's faithful followers had supp
them sufficiently punished in apprehension, that
finally ceased the threats they had perhaps never n
to carry into effect, and permitted the unfeeling y
offenders to make a retreat to the road.

Mr. Pratt and Ellen knew these old men also;
after waiting to enjoy the panic they had inflicte
the village rout, turned to meet them. Before lea
Peter alone, where he stood, Ellen dropped a pie
money by his side, which the poor wretch drew n
to him with the end of his staff, and then inclinin
head towards the two old men, as if to fix their n

on it, began to walk, closely followed by his limping dog, and in his usual measured pace, to the village.

Daddy Clayton, keenly observing, with his little ferret-eyes, the whole proceeding, hobbled past Mr. Pratt and his daughter to pick up the silver piece, as if in discharge of a usual duty; and his companion, standing still, addressed Ellen.

"The thousand blessin's on your open hand, and on your open heart, an' may they never fail you."

"Is he quieter in his mind lately, Thomaus?" inquired Miss Pratt.

"We b'lieve its asier the mind is wid him, a colleen; bud as dark as ever; an' waker, maybe: an' the heart growin' sicker an' heavier."

"Does he object as much as formerly to your following him, and taking care of him?" asked Mr. Pratt.

"Nien, Sir:—iv an odd time, maybe, the staggers 'll take him, an' then he'll put the roars out iv his mouth that 'ud frighten any Christhen to hear, at the dead o' night, all manin' for us to lave him alone in his ould nook, tho' he never says the word: bud when we spake to him, and rason wid him, an' call to his mind that we're put upon his thrack to watch him, an' help him, an' hendher him from throwin' himsef wid the river, agin, all by the ordhers o' them he knows well, an' is behoulden to obey, the poor sowl comes round in the turn iv a hand, an' kneels down a start, an' gets up as quite as the child."

"And who has set you both to watch him, Thomaus?" continued Mr. Pratt.

"Anan?" queried Thomaus, evidently with a view, in his own way, to evade the subject.

"'Tis no use to ask, Sir," said Ellen, aside to her father; "I have, myself, often before put the question, accompanying it, too, with a good bribe for confidence; but the old men keep their secret close."

"Then they invent a story to give themselves a seeming right to follow the passive wretch for the charities he receives, or for the purpose of surround-

ing him and themselves with one of the superstitious mysteries by which they always practise on the credulity and on the purse of the vulgar," said Mr. Pratt.

"It may be so, Sir; but I do not believe it is. So then, Thomaus, he now permits you to follow him, for the night, into the old building?"

"We folly him where we likes, the night an' the day, over the roads, an' the bosheens, an' the fields an' the hills, colleen," answered Daddy Clayton, hobbling back, after securing the largess, and speaking in a "cranky," dictatorial tone; "an' never ax lave from him, or any one for him; an' if he sits out on the stone, a-top o' the hill, we sit at his back the dark night long; or if he walks up an' down in the moonshine by the river's side, we walk in his thrack; an' all to do the biddin' o' them that must have their biddin' done; an' no thanks to any other body for doin' iv id, or for axin' why we do it, more-betoken."

"Well, Daddy; no one is asking you now, to put you in such bad humour," resumed Ellen, with a smile; "it will be enough for us to know that he is safe, and in want of nothing."

"Safe an' sound he is, an' safe an' sound 'ill be, an' no fear iv him doin' the harum on himself, sence the winther's night we started upon him at the wather's side, when he didn't think we war so near him; an' pult him, like the knot o' black weeds, out o' the sthrame; for them that's kep for other things don't get the lave to hang, or dhrown, or burn, at their own biddin', till the time is in it to be called to another place: an' nothin' is he in want iv, becase the Christhens won't let him; an', I tell ye agin', becase there's others to keep him an' us, if the good Christhens never opened a hand to us on our road, the long year round."

"Come, my love," whispered Mr. Pratt; "let us leave these rude and silly beggars:" and he silently turned his horse once more towards the village.

"Good day, Thomaus; good day, Daddy," said Ellen, as she joined her father.

"A good day to *you*," answered the person last addressed, in a shrill, emphatic tone; then sinking his

voice, and turning to his companion, "the good day, an' the merry one, is the laste we can wish you, when it's to be the short one; an' for him that's by your side, a curse on the day he cum among us, an' every day he stops wid us, to the last:—an' that day 'ill be black enough to him, widout our sweet blessin'."

"It's a truth it will, Daddy," responded Thomaus, as both sat down in a broken niche on the bridge, and there, propping themselves on their sticks, began a close "*shanachus.*" It was a clear, fair day, though one in February; the sky was blue and white; the river beneath them ran sparkling and transparent; its banks were green and fresh; at their backs, in the distance, rose high grounds, green and cheery too, with towering above them, remote peaks of azure hills; birds twittered by; the little hum of happy or bustling life echoed from the near village; every thing and every creature, they excepted, seemed part of one whole being, joyous in a first escape from winter into coming spring. But they sat in the shattered niche, withered, discontented, and frozen into a state of body and mind that owned no promise of returning vigour or joy; disconnected with the life and freshness about them; alone, but for their own fellowship, amid men and nature; existing only to await the hourly-expected call of death; and suggesting, from the unearthly expression of their features, from their discourse and their sentiments, either that—(in recollection of the village gossip)—they had been sent hither as the agents to a fearful purpose, or that, disgusted with a being they could no longer enjoy, and hating those they must leave to enjoy it, their tongues might only descant on the fatal haps which "flesh is heir to," and, not gratified by summing up even those, give vent to their mixed venom and credulity by weaving the omens of superstition around the mischances of life.

"It's a thruth you're sayin', Daddy," continued Thomaus;—"a curse is on every day he's to see; bud don't tell us the colleen's day is to be a short one."

"She hasn't my ill-will or my bad word, Thomaus, for her open hand an' her willin' speech to the ould an'

the needy; bud we must say our sayin' out, lad, for all that."

"Did you get the warnin' for her, Daddy?"

"She has id on her, for herself, Thomaus, as plain as the moon does have the warnin' on her, wid the *brouch** round her or not round her, for the rain, or the frost, or the storum; she has id on the cheek, white an' sinkin'-in, afore its time; an' in the eye, withered an' dhroopin', when it's behauldin' to be laughin' an' lookin' round for its pleasure; an' on the lips, as blue an' as faded as if the grave spiled em aforehand: or if she hadn't id on her, Thomaus, why, yes, I seen id for her; I seen id the bright night that Padhre walked as among the lone hills, when you couldn't see id, an' he couldn't see id, bud I could an' did; by the side o' the long white stone, on the spread o' green grass in the wide glin, I saw id standin'; an' in the red fire, while I was lookin' at id in the dead o' the night, I saw id; an' in the moanin' that went round her father's house the last night I passed it close, I hard it. She's a *lauchy* colleen, Thomaus; an' not one of 'em that goes in their brave clothes, an' rouls in their carriages, an' sets up for the ladies an' the queens o' the earth, more desarvin' iv a long long life to take their pleasure in, an' show their pride in, an' laugh at the thought iv bein' young, an' rich, an' comely; she's all this, Thomaus, an' more than this, that could be reckoned up, bud she must hear an' heed the call, Thomaus; ay, while many an ould, an' withered, an' despised thing stops behind her, Thomaus"—the speaker grinned a malicious smile, as, resting his chin upon the hand that was propped by his stick, his little red eyes fastened on those of his companion—"an' many a crature that could be her father's father crawls the earth she lies in, *Ailleen-Bawn*† must hear an' heed id, lad."

"Ochown, ochown, Daddy; the sod lie light on her, then; bud it 'll be a lesson to 'em all. An' so, Padhre 'ill never have his way an' his wish to make her an'

* Mist. † Fair Ellen.

the gorçoon come together? an' young *Redmond-dhuiv** must go a wivin to another, bud not a betther?"

"Ay, ay, gossip; Padhre 'ill be crossed in that wish, an' the proud gorçoon 'ill live to look down upon her fresh sod, an' dhrop the tears, the scaldin' tears on id, that I don't begrudge him, if he loves an' likes her as Padhre thinks he does, or wants him to do; he'll live for this, Thomaus, if his own warnin' does not come aforehand; an' I 'm lookin' for id to come, lad, an' the best prayers I say is put up that I may see it soon."

"An' that you may, Daddy; an' there 's as good as two amins to your prayer; he had ever an' always the dark look, an' the distant word, an' the close hand, for us an' our sort."

"An' no later nor the night he cum among us, in Padhre 's house, to discoorse him, afther the sassenach upstart gave him the could side o' the door, did you mind, Thomaus, the way he spoke to you an' me, an' looked on us, an' stamped at us, for crossin' him on Padre 's thrashold, as if we war the dirt o' the ground he walked on, an' he the king o' the earth, far an' near? But come, Thomaus; it 's time for us to be goin' to look afther the crature that wants an eye upon him; an' the weddin' faste is waitin' for us, lad; an' the comely bride waitin' for our blessin'; and their music, an' their dancin' an' their carousin' can't go on wid a heart, unless we're by to be the betther iv id, *morya.*†"

As he spoke these words in a bitter jeer, the old cripple hobbled with his comrade towards the village.

Meantime Mr. Pratt and his daughter rode after Peter into the village. In the middle of the street, where markets were holden, was a rude and shattered stone cross, mounted upon a broad base, and overhung by a large lime-tree. As they came on, Peter again appeared, sitting upon the base of the cross, as if resting himself, or perhaps patiently awaiting the arrival of his old warders, his dog couched at his feet, a crowd of curious or commiserating people standing around, and, in an outer circle, a second array of village brats,

* Black Redmond. † This implies a sneer.

cautiously, out of respect to the dog, applying to him the popular nick-name already mentioned, and well-disposed to annoy him, as far as they dared, in other respects. The father and daughter felt anxious to protect him from further insult.

"Get up, good Peter," said Mr. Pratt, addressing him in a kind tone as they passed. He did not move.

"Do, Padhre, get up, for God's sake, and come with us to the wedding," echoed Ellen.

He bowed his head, but did not rise.

"Stand up, my son," exhorted the aged but mild voice of a third speaker from behind; and Ellen and her father were joined by Mr. Fenelly, the parish priest, and by his young and healthy-looking coadjutor, both mounted, and also on their way to Mickle Tobin's. Between these gentlemen and Mr. Pratt and his daughter, the greetings of acquaintances ensued; while, at the first sound of the old priest's voice, Peter started, and letting his hand slide downward along his staff, knelt and moved his lips.

"Rise, my son, rise, and put a trust in Him who will soon bring you the peace of mind, and the blessing at last," continued the old clergyman: and after giving two or three very lowly obeisances, the wretched man stood up, and took his way against the hilly road that led out of the village.

"Poor fellow!" said Mr. Pratt, speaking to Mr. Fenelly; "whatever may be the cause of it, his present misery seems great and abject: Ellen and I, Sir, were making conjectures about it, before you came up; and perhaps your experience could assist us in them."

"His troubles, and, if any, his crimes, Mr. Pratt," continued the priest coldly, "are, we must suppose, solely between his God and him; but do you take our road, my dear Miss Nelly?—are you for a bit of bride-cake?—come, then,"—having received a languid smile of assent—"let an old man play the cavalier at your bridle;" and without further observation on the subject thus rather peremptorily waived, the party rode in Peter's track against the hill.

CHAPTER V.

On account of the steepness and ruggedness of the ascent, the whole party walked their horses very slowly until they gained level ground, from which a wide view of the adjacent country was commanded—of the river and the river's banks above and below the bridge, of the undulating lands at the far side of the clear inland stream, and of other more majestic grounds lying farther on than their present place of destination, but in a continuation of the same route. Below, at the backs of swelling inequalities, that hid a view of them from the bridge, appeared a scattered group of monastic ruins, in one of which Peter had taken up his residence, and from which he derived his title of Peter-na-Moulh, or Peter of the Castle. These relics of a time, a community, and institutions gone by, were about half a dozen in number; some, the remains of arched cloisters; some, square castles, much bedded in their own accumulated fragments, and in the soil, weeds, and other vegetation that ages had deposited and matured around them; and some showing shapes so curious and peculiar, as to give rise to various surmises touching their purpose on the part of all superficial visitors, and considerable doubts on the part of more antiquarian and learned observers. Village guides would point out such and such a little edifice, internally canopied by ivy that had rioted up its sides, as, at a former time, appropriated to uses, which, without a violent anachronism, the hearer could not force himself to believe were then contemplated; and the general, and, we believe, even select notion was, that many centuries ago, here had flourished an important town, grown up under monastic patronage, of which the greater portion was now crumbled off the face of the earth, and of which the very name was forgotten.

Mr. Pratt, his daughter, and the two clergymen drew up on the top of the ascent that offered the varied prospect we have sketched, and stopped some time

to look around them. Meanwhile Peter, whom they had not overtaken since he left the village before them, was seen turning up the little bridle-road, that, at the right, some hundred yards distant, led directly to the festive house; and his two old guardians came close to the party, ere they, too, followed in his steps.

At last they gained the yard before the small farmer's door; and the first thing that challenged notice was dark groups of beggars, strewed all around, men and women, old and young; some sitting, or loungingly reclining on the ground; some standing; but all laughing, or gabbling loudly or smoking; while a few sang out, at the top of their lungs, the most festive, congratulatory, or ecstatic songs. These people seemed, in fact, quite at home—quite at their ease; their stations taken up altogether as matter of right, and themselves deposited here as part of the wedding-furniture. Their bearing showed a conclusion that there was abundance of food in preparation; "enough an' lavins" for them all. Not less than one hundred could have been assembled; and perhaps, confident of their numbers, their state of easy expectation of good treatment might be intended and received as a compliment to the substance and consideration of the house.

Standing alone, in a remote corner, his back resting against the low wall that surrounded the yard, his person and head drawn up, and his eyes bent on the ground as usual, appeared Padhre-na-Moulh. Beer had been distributed among the mendicants; and one or two came to him in a way half brotherly, half sneering, to offer a draught. He shook his head in token of refusal. Another, producing his own travelling horn, invited him to taste "a dhrop o' mouth-wather," meaning whiskey. This kindness he also declined in a similar way. His old friends now entered the yard, and walking to the pump, procured a bowl of water, and brought it to him. Of the primitive beverage he drank sparingly; then pacing towards the middle of the yard, stooped and gathered up a few raw potatoes dropt there accidentally, put them into his wallet, and finally strode beyond the precincts of the house of feasting, and sat

down in a near field, as if to await the attendance of Thomaus and Daddy Clayton, who could not so soon be expected to give up the chances of the day. Ellen thought she might read, in his present proceedings, the conduct of a man upon whom the trade of begging the morsel that supported him was necessitously imposed; who came, therefore, upon a kind of professional day, to a chief mart for his business; but who, having discharged his obligation by picking up the few potatoes, turned from a scene of human happiness in which he either would not or durst not participate. While she regarded him, and, indeed, while all her party paused a moment to take in the scene around, Mr. Fenelly beckoned the two old men, Peter's companions; whispered them, when they came to his stirrup; and they were immediately observed, with looks of mortification and ill-humour, to join the poor solitary in the outer field, cause him to arise, and follow in his footsteps across the road, and then down a zig-zag path, that, owing to the high situation of Tobin's house, was seen to wind over successive eminences to the ruins by the river's side.

The party alighted, gave their horses to a crowd of zealous grooms in attendance, and stepped to the house. At the open door they were received by the vanithee, dressed in her richest clothes, with a face of great business and importance, and yet with a commanding self-possession, as if all the bustle around her was no unusual thing, and as if no one should have to say that it had put her out of countenance or equilibrium. She seemed to feel strongly, nay, awfully, the responsibility of her situation, but to experience, at the same time, a full consciousness of supporting it without difficulty. At her back appeared her "honest man o' the house," attended by four or five strapping sons, from all of whom the visitors had to undergo (after respectful obeisances) many hearty shakes of the hand, thanks, deep and lively, for the honour done to the poor cabin, and *cead-mille-phalteagh*, over and over again. Then, preceded by the dame, and surrounded by the men as a guard of honour, they were allowed to march along.

The first apartment traversed was, of course, the kitchen; and here were such immense fires; such roasting and broiling; and such a fuss among such a crowd of women,—half composed of the real domestics of the house, half of all the bride's elderly friends and relations, come far and near to assist in the preparation of her wedding feast;—and such an oppressive heat; and such loud talking among them, as they gave twenty different orders about dressing the viands: and such a steam, and such a fume, that, after a look or two, quite sufficient to prove they need not be hungry for the evening, the guests, still following the vanithee, and enclosed by their body guard, were glad to pass into an inner room.

This was a bed-chamber, containing a curtained bed, "dacent to look at," and a rude chest of drawers at the other side. A flank of damsels were sitting on the edge of the bed, who, as soon as the visitors entered, and that they had stood up to drop their "curtshies," seemed to stand on the defensive; glance prepared for glance, and a smart word for every question. They were dressed in white; or, as nearly in white as circumstances would allow; and had on close-fitting caps, with great bunches of white ribbon at one side. It need not further be declared that they were the friends and handmaids of the bride-elect, who, in the background, sitting sideways, on the other edge of the bed, and pretending to be undistinguished among the throng, hung back, in appropriate timidity, until she was formally, and not without some native graces of action and manner on her part, introduced by her father to the important strangers.

As the bustle of presentation was just subsiding, the vanithee, putting her face to the little window of the chamber, while the clink of horses's hoofs echoed in the yard, accompanied by a congratulatory hum among the swarm of beggars, gave a cry of great interest and pleasure, and adding "Miss Rosy, Miss Rosy!—your thousand pardons, genteels—come, gorçoons, come—" hurried out, attended by her husband and sons. Mr. Pratt, also looking into the yard, saw, descending from

a beautiful long-tailed little palfrey, the young lady about whom he latently felt so much curiosity. A grave-looking servant, that had ridden with her to the house, came respectfully to proffer his assistance as she quitted her saddle; but waving her hand towards an elderly female whom he had left sitting in a pillion upon his own horse, Miss Rosalie D'Arnell bounded lightly, gracefully, and only with the energy of a youthful spirit, to the ground.

A moment after, the hand of her old companion drawn under her arm, and preceded by the dame of the house, and, as the first party had been treated, surrounded by the male guard of honour, the young lady entered the little chamber. Mr. Pratt inwardly acknowledged, with a mixture of surprise, admiration, and discontent, the superior attractions Miss D'Arnell at a first view presented. She was tall; roundly, but elegantly formed; her complexion almost brown, yet glowing with subdued colour; her hair and eyes black, and altogether something of a foreign character stamped on her features. Her air was lofty; but not of the kind of loftiness he had been led to anticipate; for blandness and smiles tempered it to fascination. She wore a riding habit of green cloth, of which the flowing skirts were tucked up and thrown over her right arm; and, instead of the man's hat generally affected, with a very bad grace, by our fair young equestrians, a Spanish-shaped one, of black silk, looped up in front, and half hid in a clustering plume of black ostrich feathers. In face, gait, expression, and costume, her elderly associate seemed decidedly a foreigner.

When, with rapid step, Miss D'Arnell entered the little apartment, Ellen was sitting beside the bride, holding the hand she had just shaken, and in the act of pronouncing a name, in consequence of Kitty Tobin's inquiries, that brought tears to her eyes, and made her heart pant in her bosom. The young ladies exchanged glances, as the new guest, observing Ellen, stopped a moment at the threshold; mutual blushes, perhaps the result of a common thought, crimsoned their cheeks; and a shade of embarrassment began to steal

over the circle, when Miss D'Arnell rallied, advanced smiling to the bride, took her hands, made her some pretty compliments, in pure English, but with a few peculiarities of accent: then turned gracefully, freely, yet, perhaps, condescendingly, to Ellen, saluted her also; then to the old priest; and, while Mr. Pratt's courtierly bow received but a slight and queen-like notice, seemed to lavish upon him the greetings of a close and kindly intimacy.

A renewed embarrassment might have ensued, were it not soon understood that the introduction of the guests into this apartment, was merely for the purpose of allowing them to diseneumber themselves of their outward dress, here officiously to be laid up till the hour of departure. As Miss D'Arnell, Ellen, Mr. Pratt, and the priest, accordingly proceeded to doff their habits, hats, and great coats, one of the bride's brothers, the best looking of the guard of honour, addressed the former mentioned lady, with a well-managed waggery of face, voice, and manner, peculiarly Irish. "Tunder-an'-ouns, Miss!—we ax pardon"—pretending to be shocked at his own abruptness—"but, what's the raison, wid your ladyship's lave, you come with the boots on?" as his eye glanced dolefully at her feet—"by the powers o'man, Miss, you'll want the use o' the legs to-night, an' sure its kilt you'll be with them boults on you, God bless you."

Laughing, in a kind of tolerating good humour, while her old *bonne* muttered "*fi donc*," and stepped close to her side, Miss D'Arnell called to her servant, and soon satisfied her guardsman that she had foreseen the should "want the use of her feet:" the man producing a pair of dancing slippers, which she explained were to replace her boots at the proper time. This attention to circumstances on the part of the greatest guest, and the bountiful wish it showed to come prepared for the sports of the night, did not fail to command a loud murmur of delight from every creature present, and Mr. Pratt felt uncomfortable at seeing his drooping daughter, fully beloved as she was, only second in consideration and interest, where he had reckoned on seeing her

predominate, particularly as the only child of the bridegroom's landlord.

"Musha, the light of our eyes you war, Miss Rosy," resumed the lad who had provoked the scene—"an' them is the darlins o' dancin'-pumps, sure enough," taking them from the servant:—'by Gar, the sight o' them 'ud make one dance without the piper—if they'd only go on a body,"—laying one of them along the sole of his own large shoe; "well, God be praised! the likes of sich a little foot as them does for, we never hard of afore."

Again laughing, and, perhaps, blushing in a degree, at the subdued Irish flattery thus paid her, on a point about which, we have been told, all ladies are anxious, Miss D'Arnell, inattentive to the surprise expressed in the glances, whispers, and fidgets of her old companion, led the way, handed out by Mr. Fenelly, from the chamber; Ellen, Mr. Pratt, and the young priest following.

"She must have heard the report of Redmond's present situation," thought Mr. Pratt, as all got into motion; "but it troubles her not; she does not, cannot love him."

The ladies and gentlemen, attended as before, were again ushered through the heat, gabble, and smells of the kitchen, into another room at its opposite side. It was a neat, earthen-floored, white-washed apartment, of moderate size, hung round with those large rude wood prints of scripture subjects, (having explanatory rhymes at the bottom) that are to be purchased for about one penny each at Irish fairs and markets; particularly remarkable for the hideous faces and forms they display as likenesses of holy persons; and which may be truly designated as frightful if not impious caricatures of saints, angels, and higher beings.

Here the visitors found a large assemblage of young and old; the young folk predominating, however. A piper, seated near the hearth, on a three-legged stool, was blowing away, with might and main, while two sets, of two couples each, danced—as well as they could manage it in the limited space prescribed—the old reel

of four. This was premature, it may be remarked before the marriage feast, nay, even before the marriag itself. Yes; but, time to spare, and a piper at hand such a group of "boys and girls" might keep quiet in Holland, England, or even perhaps in Scotland; not in Ireland. Around, by the walls, the lookers-on sat or stood, all, of every age and sex, in their holiday garbs; best wigs, best caps, best coats; and every face looking a blithe anticipation of the long night of mirth and fun that was surely to follow.

The entrance of the important guests gave no interruption to the dancers, if we except the curtsies adroitly dropt by the female *figurantes*, in the evolutions of the figure of the reel, and one or two ecstatic shouts and capers of recognition vouchsafed by their partners. But among the old folk, and the young people waiting for their turn "on the floor," much anxious and smiling bustle took place, which, perhaps, had ended in some confusion, but that, a few minutes after the party entered, all were summoned to the nuptial feast.

Instantly, the piper stopped; the dancers became fixed in one position; and every countenance grew grave at the near approach of the time for behaving "dacent." Still heralded by the quiet, all-important vanithee, and enclosed by their body-guard, the superior guests were a third time escorted through the now-subdued region of the kitchen, to a door which opened into the yard, where they met the bride, her favoured handmaid, and other friends; and then across part of the yard, to the barn; which was, and, on all such occasions, is, the banquet-hall in Ireland; and on other occasions, too, of a very different character, by any further allusion to which we will not damp the present time of mirth and feasting.

Around three sides of the walls of the spacious barn, tables, constructed for the evening, were ranged, with —about that place called the head—chairs for the more considerable guests, and, at either side of the remainder of the board, forms for all comers. Inside, at the walls, there was barely room for the people to sit down; as much as possible of the area of the barn being kept free for dancing.

Before the chair which the priest was to occupy, appeared a huge mass of "corned beef," bolstered by a bed of greens, carrots, and parsnips, and reeking with a fine steam, that rolled up in volumes to the wattled roof. To it succeeded, at either side, legs of mutton, boiled; shoulders of mutton, roasted; turkeys and "salary" sauce, (no bad things); sides of bacon, roast geese, fowls, chickens, hams, legs of mutton again; and shoulders and saddles again; and varieties of the feathered tribe, again and again, all the tables round—until the eye became bewildered in tracing the abundant monotony. To the priest's hand were laid bottles of wine, and more awaited his call in a basket at the back of his chair. Cold punch, in great jugs, attended on the company lower down. Beer barrels, propped in the corners, yielded a dull, plethoric sound, declaratory of their well-filled condition, to whatever hasty heel knocked against them, in passing by.

Crowds of inferior guests poured in after our party, and places were taken, and the feast began. Mr. Fenelly, appalled by the mountain of beef he saw he had to cut through, requested his "coadjutor" to sit by him, one and the same with himself, as it were, to render such assistance, on the present practical occasion, as might indeed be worthy of his official title. Upon Mr. Fenelly's right sat the bride, according to etiquette; upon his left, or rather upon the left of his fellow-labourer, the bride's-maid; next to the bride, Miss D'Arnell; next to her, Ellen; next to her, the old foreign lady, looking very much amazed; then the vanithee; then the bride's friends; and then the female friends, in general, of the family and occasion, all that side of the table round according to rank and standing in the world, until they ended in the poor relations, followers, and even helpers and servants; each and every, be it remembered, of the same sex: for the division of sexes, at the two sides of the tables, was, though not a general practice, as remarkable as the similar divisions to be observed in a synagogue. Heading the opposite rank, appeared Mr. Pratt, the first, after the brides-maid, upon the left of the priests; below him, the "man o' the

house;" a row of "strong farmers" followed; that is, the richest of the class to which old Tobin belonged, with Darby Roach and his younger sons among them; after them a more numerous string of farmers and farmers' sons, of less degree; until, as at the women's side, very humble folk, including pipers and fiddlers, closed the array. But, to Mr. Pratt's surprise, Ristharde Roach, the hero of the evening, no where appeared. His landlord looked round for him in vain; he certainly was not to be seen.

Dinner, or supper, or whatever it may properly be called, went on. Legs and shoulders of mutton, geese and turkeys, hams and fowls disappeared in a trice, as if they had never been. Mr. Pratt officiated at a goose, of which, when finally carved, the only piece left on the dish was that too well secured by his fork. But the most general attack was made upon the heap of beef at the head, which, we are forced to admit, we cannot describe, by a technical name; it was too monstrous for a round merely; the roaring Bull of Bashan, supposing him vast and eatable as he was famous, could not supply such a one; and yet it looked round, too; and, for aught we know, might be an entire animal, horns and hoofs excepted, coiled up into that form, like a collared eel. In truth and reality, it completely hid the two priests when they innocently attempted to sit down to their task; and it was only by standing erect to their full height, that the gentlemen, working together with two great carving-knives and forks, while all the time their brows teemed in the downright labour of the office, could answer the incessant demands made upon them. For we repeat, no matter what other dish might be assailed, first or last, every creature in the barn would have a plate of beef from his "reverence." And amid all this hurry of supplying and consuming, great was the din of dishes and plates, knives and forks, glasses, jugs, tumblers, and even wooden "noggins;" of mastication and swallowing hearty draughts, and smacking lips after them; of asking and assenting; of gabbling aside and across to each other, in quick jest and repartee, suggested by some feature or circumstance of the occasion; while, now and then, a young

fellow, whose very heart was in the business, and whose veins swelled too high with present and anticipated pleasure, or some old queer-wigged sire, who unused to liquor during dinner, had hobnobbed too freely, owned the influence of the joyous uproar, (or, perhaps, deemed it a warrant for the freedom) by emitting, in a short interval of eating or drinking, an expressive—"whoo!"—which, echoing to the beggars in the yard, was caught up, and duly acknowledged. Still, to the increased surprise of Mr. Pratt, Ristharde, the reputed bridegroom, did not appear.

The only persons who behaved with any considerable degree of quietness during the meal, were the bride, her mother, and her five brothers. The young girl herself acted her part—we do not use the phrase in an invidious sense—well and evenly. She seemed serious, studiously polite in her returns to the various attentions paid her by the priests and her grand guests, as if she had reflected on the important character she was about to assume, and already prepared herself to wear it with due dignity; but, added to all this, there was a pensiveness about her, and even a tearful suffusion in her eyes, and an occasional tremor of her lip, which scarcely could be accounted for by the theory of maidenly fears and regrets. In fact, she was thinking, now and then—but without any improper reference or association—of the present fate of her foster-brother, Redmond. Her mother's demureness of manner has already been noticed. Her brothers did not sit at the table, but walked about, from guest to guest, ascertaining the wants or wishes of each, or suggesting gratifications of appetite; or superintending different removes, which rapidly occurred, such as the replacing a roast shoulder of mutton with a boiled leg of the same; or helping those of the servants who were not, for the moment, enjoying themselves, to visit the beer barrels, or deposit jugs of punch on the table; and all this the young men went through with a gravity, a propriety, and an ease of deportment, that reminded one of well-trained stewards at a more fashionable public dinner;

and that certainly gave a pleasing notion of the sincere and simple earnestness of the old hospitality.

We must hasten to announce the end of the feast. All claimants had been silenced, the table cleared, a fresh supply of wine and punch placed on it, still no bridegroom was forthcoming; Mr. Fenelly stood up to pronounce a grace; it was over; every eye turned on the bride, or to the door; a silence only slightly broken by sly whispers and smothered titters ensued; footsteps sounded in the yard; an Amazonian wench entered with a cake, almost twice as great as a Cheshire cheese, and placed it at the soggarth's right hand. The two clergymen, with features in which solemnity and good hopes, as well as good-humour, struggled hard, began to cut and delve it very mechanically. The bride looked down upon her lap, and the paleness that comes from a sense of a rapidly approaching crisis, spread over her cheeks. Other steps sounded near the door, and blushes, quick and bright, chased that paleness away. Two young men entered; and the subdued cheer of welcome, and the jest and jibe that instantly broke the silence, proclaimed the bridegroom and his brides-man. Their absence, until this moment, was all according to *bienseance*. In Ireland, upon the day of her marriage, a country bride is supposed to know nothing of what is going to happen; crowds of young women, and old ones too, are collected to hold her sacred from premature contact with her destined husband; he, like a great oaf, reverences the etiquette too, keeping far away under the *surveillance* of his "young man;" and just at the nick of time he happens to come in, as we see in the present instance, quite unconscious, as it were, and with his "God save all here," as his jeering friends call it. And the whole of this is "dacency" and "manners."

Mr. Pratt looked hard at Ristharde, scarce recognizing, in the tight-made, light-clad fellow that now appeared, the same person who, covered with the dirt of the fields, his knees burst through his small-clothes, and his top-coat hanging clumsily about him, had come with his father, Darby, to invite him to the nuptials.

Ristharde's wedding suit consisted of a close-made buck-skin, white yarn stockings, and small-pointed pumps; a flaming yellow vest, a blue coat, tolerably fine, and tolerably cut, a richly figured silk cravat, a smooth chin, and a smartly cropped head. The only thing about him like his former self was his ostentatious sheepiness, as, stepping over the threshold of the barn, after his bridesman, and keeping one hand in his breeches' pocket, and holding his head down, he pretended, at thirty years of age, to be ashamed and out of countenance before the company, and on account of what he was going to do. But a certain admixture of waggery now ran through this affectation, which Mr. Pratt had not observed upon the day before alluded to, and which, to a skilful eye, fully redeemed "Masther Ristharde" from the charge of real poltroonery. In fact, his manner, and particularly his faint sly smile, seemed to say,—"Look at me, neighbours; God help a poor boy like me! musha, see how ashamed I am!"

By some simultaneous movement, fussy, but regular, and of which it might be difficult to explain the complex machinery, bride and bridegroom confronted each other, on the middle of the barn floor, a few seconds after Ristharde's entrance. The girl stood with her father at one side, her bridesmaid at the other, her mother and brothers at her back, and Miss D'Arnell, Ellen, and many humbler female friends around. Ristharde was also supported by his father, Darby, his "young man," Mr. Pratt, and several others. The rest of the company stood up in their places. The old priest put on a slight badge of his clerical character, opened his missal, and making the sign of the cross with his outstretched hand, approached the young couple. A profound silence at last prevailed.

The clergyman first demanded of the relations of both parties, if their full consent had been given to the nuptials. The old vanithee, and the two old fathers, rendered a hearty affirmative, while their voices were low and broken, however, and their own acknowledgment of thus abandoning all future parental authority, brought tears to their eyes. Kitty Tobin quickly caught

the infection, and wept and sobbed oughtright; and even Ristharde, to say nothing of the bridesmaid and the near connexions and friends, male and female, snuffled, and changed from one leg to the other, to keep up his courage. The next question proposed by the priest was directed to himself.

"Have you, Richard Roach, given your promise of marriage to any other woman?"

"Och, the divil's the one!—we ax God's pardon, your reverence, an' your own ten thousand pardons" —(he had really been thrown off his guard, half indignant at the supposition)—"but never's the one, we mane, far and wide, from a child up."

The commencement of this answer had nearly disturbed the gravity of all around, but that, with a stern brow, Mr. Fenelly brought Ristharde to task for his most untimely tendency to an imprecation; and then the clergyman at once proceeded in his office. Before commencing the ceremony, he addressed himself to bride and bridegroom, upon the nature of the engagement into which they were about to enter; its divine ordination and the object of that ordination; the dispositions in which it ought to be embraced; and its future duties and responsibilities. To expect a blessing on their nuptials he told them they were bound to appear before God and him, in the state of grace, that is, free from mortal sin, and full of contrition and sorrow for the crime and errors of their former life. He told them that their chief impulse in becoming man and wife ought to arise from a wish to obey a divine command. He warned them, that it was only by loving, cherishing and practising forbearance towards each other, they could hope to fulfil the common duties of their future stations, and at the same time, secure mutual happiness; and should God bless them in an offspring, (Ristharde again shuffled on his legs, and some young girls smiled and bit their lips, and others hung down their heads,) he enforced upon them, as their paramount duty, the bringing up such children in the love and fear of Him who gave them.

After this discourse, which was impressively deli-

vered, the real business of the evening promptly went on. There was some unnecessary delay, towards the middle of the ceremony, on account of Ristharde's repeatedly mistaking the pocket in which he thought he had put up the ring; but, "as all his pockets were very new, and by coorse, very sthrange to him," (his own explanation), "it was no great wondher that he didn't know their ins-an-outs pat, at the first going off." In a few minutes, however, the knot was tied fast enough; and then, to conclude the whole, the new husband and wife, their friends, and all in the barn, knelt down at the priest's instance, to join him in a devout prayer for a blessing on the marriage.

The first movement of the old clergyman to rise, was the signal for a scene of extraordinary and uproarious vivacity. At a rustic wedding in Ireland, it is a great point of chuckling ambition, among the young fellows assembled, to try, not only who shall snatch the first congratulatory kiss from the new made wife, after her lord has saluted her, but, if possible, who shall be beforehand with his very self, in that pleasant ceremonial. Accordingly, even while the whole company knelt to join in the priest's last prayer, Mr. Pratt, prepared for the coming event, noticed the anticipating glances of many a lad, turned sideways, towards the middle of the floor, and the anticipating movements too of disposing the limbs into good order for a couching spring; while Ristharde, on his part, returned the reconnoitring regards of his friends, and was seen to shuffle, very cautiously, on his knees, still closer to his bride. One light-limbed, short youth, who, during dinner, had been remarkable for the premature "screeches" that now and then rung through the barn, and who seemed a compound of the most restless animal spirits, particularly attracted Mr. Pratt's notice. Unlike the generality of his companions, who knelt on the ground, leaning over their form, he knelt on the form, leaning over the table, one leg slyly raised, and propping his body for a sudden effort, while his light blue eye fixed, sparkling intensely and almost ferociously, on poor Kitty Tobin, or, as she must now be called, Roach;

and scarcely had the old priest begun to rise, and the young couple to follow his example, when, like a shell out of a mortar, this fellow darted with a high and nimble vault across the table, scattering, as he described his parabola, glasses, jugs, and plenty of good liquor, and breaking through every rank, male and female, until, with a "hurroo! the first kiss for Jim Burne!"—he landed at the bride's side, and clasped her in his arms.—But Ristharde, to his credit, foiled the attack, vigorous and well-concerted as it was. In fact, he had especially feared the nimbleness and evident intentions of this very Jim Burne; so that, even while his young wife rose up, his own arm was round her neck, pressing her down; and just when the treacherous foe sprung upon her, he had only to use the superior strength of his disengaged hand, to keep back the mad fellow's head, until he ravished, himself, the initiating favour which was certainly his due. Jim was therefore obliged to content himself with kissing the bride the first of all his companions, who scrambled, in groups, to enjoy the honour at second, third, and twentieth rate; and Kitty still had to undergo the farewell and weeping salutes of her parents, brothers, and young and old friends, before she could again sit at the nuptial board.

And now began the gathering in of the soggarth's crop. Now the bride cake went round; each piece taken up being replaced by an offering, according to the circumstances of the consumer, while the "God bless you, God bless you!" of Mr. Fenelly and his coadjutor escaped often and zealously.

Still, "by course of manners," Ristharde remained separate from his bride, though one would think he had at last earned the right of sitting closely by her side. She returned to her place at Mr. Fenelly's right hand; he was only allowed a *tete-à-tete* with her bridesmaid. The wedding-cake completed its revolution, and the symptoms of a new scene became visible. Two pipers, blind old fellows, sleek in face and person, though rather tattered in attire, shambled from among the humbler guests, at the end of the barn, and

took their seats on two stools, in a corner. They were quickly followed by two little fiddlers, thin and half-starved, (until that evening,) but active and frisky as kittens, who also seated themselves, in virtue of their superior craft, before the pipers; and, the orchestra thus assembled, a jarring noise of scraping, thrumming, squeaking and grunting, proclaimed that nuisance for which the most fashionable orchestras are celebrated, namely, the prefatory tuning of their instruments.

No sooner had the discord begun than a seriqus consultation might be observed between the bridesman and the vanithee, which we are able to explain. In the absence of a guest of high degree it was the "young man's" privilege to dance the first dance with the bride. Now Mr. Pratt was a guest of distinction; but, query —whether he was not also too grave, or too stiff in his limbs, to get through the rapid movements of an Irish jig?—And, indeed, a few nods and words from the gentleman soon decided that he thought he was, and up jumped the bridesman to make his scrape to Kitty Tobin.

She dropped her curtsey, of course, and gave her hand; but fresh tears streamed from her eyes, as, in passing behind Ellen, she said, loud enough to be overheard by Miss D'Arnell and Mr. Pratt, too,— "Avoch, Miss, I thought it was another I'd dance the first step with, this night."

All knew she alluded to Redmond. Ellen grew pale, and hung down her head; Miss D'Arnell blushed, and did the same thing; and Mr. Pratt said, expressively—"And I, too, Kitty: and you cannot regret the disappointment more than I."

Additional embarrassment followed this reply, until Ristharde shyly came up to Miss D'Arnell, stopped before her, and performed his best bow. The young lady, recovering from her blush, with a gracious and radiant smile, rose up at his demand; the set for a reel was completed; the orchestra struck out; amid cries of joy and exultation, the dance began; and for some time, nothing further was said, or seemed to be felt on the

subject; no doubt Mr. Pratt himself wished to proceed no farther in it, until Ellen should, in her turn, after Miss D'Arnell, be out of the way, dancing, as any discussion might contradict the account she had received of Redmond's absence.

When, however, the bride and Miss D'Arnell had returned to their seats, and that Ellen, yielding to the pressing entreaties of her father, had answered the modest claim of one of Kitty's brothers, and proceeded with him to the middle of the floor, Mr. Pratt renewed the topic.

"Yes, Kitty, you cannot be more sorry for the unaccountable absence of your foster-brother than I am."

"Avoch, Sir, an' that's sorry enough, if all they say be thrue," answered Kitty.

"Why, what do they say?" in apparent surprise.

"Unaccountable, Sir?" repeated the old priest, distantly, and as if he had not heard the bride's reply, nor Mr. Pratt's question arising out of it—"the boy's absence is accounted for, at least."

"Pray let some one tell me how, Sir; for *I* cannot account for it, and I shall most anxiously receive the information of others."

"Then *you* cannot surely have countenanced the report, Sir?" continued the clergyman. Kitty and Miss D'Arnell looked up, and fixed their eyes on Mr. Pratt.

"I do not precisely apprehend what you mean, Mr. Fenelly. Several idle persons have, indeed, afflicted me with an account of my young ward having, since his departure from my house, taken up with strange associates; how true or how false that story may be, I cannot tell; I can only hope it is utterly false; my sincere love for the boy, and, indeed, my knowledge of his character, feelings, and principles, compel me to discredit it; but——"

"The friends of both, Mr. Pratt," interrupted Miss D'Arnell, "of you and of the young gentleman, must rejoice at that avowal."

"God bless him for it!" added Kitty.

"I do but my duty, and give way to my own sincere thoughts when I make it, madam," resumed Mr. Pratt, while the lady's vivacity created a secret sinking of his heart;—"and so convinced am I that poor Redmond, getting impatient of control in his professional studies, has only taken a wild trip to Dublin or London, perhaps, that all my inquiries concerning him have, in total indifference to the rumour spoken of, been hitherto made in the hopes of finding him in one or other of those cities. But, as I was about to remark, the place of his absence, wherever it may be, would not give the cause of his absence; and yet that was the point, Mr. Fenelly, to which you alluded, I believe; and for which, if I understand you, you meant to say there was some certain report, too?"

"It was, Sir."

"Then, Sir, I have only to say, that apart from the probable cause I have before mentioned, namely, Redmond's dislike of his studies, and his resenting the zealous efforts made to direct his mind to them, I am quite at a loss to account for his disappearance from my house."

"Thank God, then," said the old priest.

"Thank God," echoed Miss D'Arnell. Kitty uttered, joyously, a similar ejaculation.

"May I ask you what you mean, Mr. Fenelly?" inquired Mr. Pratt.

"Yes, Sir; and I will tell you with pleasure. Since you know nothing of any other cause, the horrible report that attributes another must be totally false; because, to have the least truth, it could have come only from you."

"Exactly. I do not even know the nature of the report."

"Then it is as well, perhaps, not to trouble you with it, Mr. Pratt."

"Except that as the guardian, as well of the reputation as of the person of Mr. Redmond," said Miss D'Arnell, "this gentleman ought to be made acquainted with every thing which concerns him; particular-

ly with a slander that tends to degrade the young man for ever."

"True, my dear," resumed Mr. Fenelly.

"True, indeed," resumed Mr. Pratt; "and therefore I hope I may press my question, and again ask what the report is?"

"One that goes to make your ward disgraced and dishonoured in his parentage, Sir," said the priest.

"Indeed!—" pausing, and then adding, in a tone of surprise and regret, and as if half speaking to himself—"how, in the name of Heaven, could that have gone out?"

"No matter, since it is so false, Sir."

"And since the gentleman says it is," added Miss D'Arnell.

"Avoch, the blessin's on his heart, I say again, for spakin' the word," sobbed Kitty—"I always said it was a black story."

"I never authorized it," resumed Mr. Pratt, sighing deeply, as he looked on the table. The priest and Miss D'Arnell exchanged glances.

"Then I have your authority, for the sake of our young friend, to contradict it, Mr. Pratt?"

"Sir?—why, yes—that is—in fact, Mr. Fenelly, this much I say; whatever may be the necessitous mystery attendant on my ward's parentage, I alone am, I believe, the sole person living in whose breast it is deposited,—and deposited, too, under seal of inviolable secrecy: so, Sir, you can draw your own conclusions. You see I am not authority—am not accountable for the impertinent and inexplicable rumour; and—I beg your pardon—but as Miss Pratt now returns to us, we will, if you please, waive the subject; there are reasons, Mr. Fenelly, why we should;—you perceive her delicate state of health; and on account of certain impressions studiously made by the certain person we spoke of, any hint on the matter might prove very injurious; in fact, Sir, I must try to keep these reports, and this gossip, close from the poor child's ear."

Mr. Pratt spoke in a whisper, but in a whisper sufficiently loud to be overheard by Miss D'Arnell: and it

was overheard by the young lady, and produced the effect the speaker intended. Her dark brow reddened and knit; her dark eye flashed; and, in a second after, the blood rushed back to her heart, and her heavings and pantings could scarce be restrained even by the strong spirit that strove to sway them. As Ellen came to sit by her side, she rose up haughtily, and was about to address her old companion, as if with a command to retire, when, to the dismay of all around, Miss D'Arnell, fixing her eyes on a pane of glass at Mr. Pratt's back, that during the day admitted light into the barn, interrupted herself with a short shrill scream, and again sunk in her chair; and the surprise of the hearers had not a second's time to subside, when Ellen, also staring in the same direction, echoed her ery, and clung trembling to her rival.

"What is the matter, my love?" inquired Mr. Pratt, after having turned his eyes, with a hundred others, (for the music and dancing instantly stopped) to the little window, and seen nothing.

"Redmond, Sir,—it was Redmond, looking in upon us!" answered Ellen:—"Miss D'Arnell, was it not?"

"Absurdity, child," said her father.

"It was your ward, Sir," observed Miss D'Arnell.

"His face, an' no other's," added Kitty, who, without any show of lively emotion, seemed absorbed in the little event; "Ristharde! Mick!" beckoning to her husband and one of her brothers—"let ye go out an' see if it wasn't."

"Do so, Ristharde," said Mr. Pratt, "and tell him that, every thing forgotten and forgiven, I shall be made very happy by his presence."

The two young men withdrew. Little was said till they returned to inform the party that Redmond did not appear about the house. Miss D'Arnell made no remark. Ellen and the bride were not satisfied; and, at their joint entreaties, and the added request of Mr. Pratt, a fresh party set off to institute inquiries, and a search through the neighbourhood, and also to call, if necessary, at that gentleman's house, who now professed himself so interested, that he would only wait the

arrival of Cotteril, and his men at arms, to look after the business himself. Meantime he urged, that, on his or his ward's account, the mirth of the evening might not be interrupted; Ellen seconded him; and the dance was blithely resumed by the humble guests; while Ristharde gave a new piece of information on a different subject. Two men, he said, father and son, tenants of a gentleman in a distant parish, (the father lately made his gamekeeper,) waited, abroad in the house, to see the soggarth and Mr. Pratt, on the head of a marriage about to be entered into.

Mr. Fenelly said, he would not see them; he had nothing to do with them; let them call on the priest of their own parish.

Ristharde explained, that the fair one who formed the chief subject of the business, lived in Mr. Fenelly's parish, and that, of course, the wedding must take place under Mr. Fenelly's jurisdiction. As to Mr. Pratt, there was a crabbed point of law, touching certain settlements offered by the young woman's father, which the strangers were most anxious to submit to his honour, and to no one else, far and near; and they had already called at "Square Pratt's" house, for that purpose.

Still Mr. Fenelly refused to see the claimants; the girl's father or brothers were the only proper persons to apply to; the present course was irregular; the hour was late, too; and two couples more were waiting for him in the village. If he was to speak to them at all, let them come in the morning, to his own door.

"And what did his honour, Square Pratt, say?" continued Ristharde. "The two poor men looked up to his honour more than all the world besides, for a settling of the bit o' law, for 'em; an' they thravelled far that day to spake a word to him; and if Square Pratt woul'n't see 'em that night, they couldn't see him tomorrow, or any day afther, no more than his reverance; for they were behoulden to start for home, that moment, an' be back agin, afore cock-crow."

"Yes, Sir," said a stranger, "who then entered, a decent-looking little elderly man, lightly-limbed, clad

in a green frock, the emblem of the profession Ristharde had given him, and wearing a small patch on his right eye—"yis, your honour, all's threw that the boy says; an' we hope your good honour 'll not be for sendin' us home without the law we cum so far to get; me an' my son Ned, Sir, that's waiten in hopes, abroad in the house, your honour."

"Have deeds been drawn up, my good man?" asked Mr. Pratt, who felt flattered at the earnestness of the application from people so far out of his district.

"Yis, Sir, if it's the parchments your honour manes, Ned has 'em in his pocket, Sir."

"Then I will just step out to him, and not interrupt sport here," and Mr. Pratt rose.

"Do so, dear father," said Ellen, "it may do the poor people a service."

"God bless you, Sir; an' many thanks; an' God bless you, too, Miss, an' if we stood up against the whole world besides, never fear the hearty good-will of Ned an' myself, an' all belongin' to us, to the last day you dhraw breath," said the man, as he was about to follow Mr. Pratt out of the barn: "an' here, Miss" —stepping up to her, while he passed her chair,— "here's a bit of a petition, like, on another matther, that we put into your hands for his honour, knowin' you'll do your best with him, for us; only you won't open it till Square Pratt comes back, an' then give it to himself to read, or maybe to his reverence, there; an' so, a good night, an' God reward you."

Ellen, promising her influence, took a sealed letter from the man, who then slowly left the barn, in Mr. Pratt's steps.

This little incident partly relieved the uneasiness and embarrassment of Redmond's appearance at the pane of glass. The old clergyman spoke on common topics to the young ladies, or kindly or jocosely to the bride. Miss D'Arnell and Ellen also addressed her, occasionally interchanging, between themselves, a ceremonious and honied word: for the latter, recovered from the surprise of seeing her lover at the window, enjoyed good spirits in the hopes of soon hearing he

was safe; and the former, repenting her late haughtiness to her gentle rival, would show that she was, in the first place, perfectly at her ease, and, in the second place, graciously disposed to be affable.

Kitty was again called out to dance; Ristharde and her brothers, leaving Mr. Pratt and his clients quite alone in the house, that they might more effectually discuss their law point, also joined the revellers; and the mirth grew more energetic and boisterous than before. More than half an hour might have elapsed, when Ellen began to think her father staid away very long; but the recollection that he was engaged in doing a kind service to his humble suitors, curbed any expression of uneasiness. Soon after, Mr. Fenelly remarked on that gentleman's absence, and Ellen grew alarmed. At her instance, one of the bride's brothers went out to see what detained him with the strange man, and returned, looking pale and frightened, to announce that the house was quite empty; neither Mr. Pratt nor the new-comers appearing in it.

All expressed themselves in words of surprise or apprehension. Ellen's sensitive heart misgave her. The two priests, accompanied by a crowd of men, went towards the house to ascertain the truth of the story, and once more the revels stopped; and, amid whispering and conjecturing, the throng awaited the result of the investigation. Mr. Fenelly, his coadjutor, and their friends, soon came back; their features expressing the confirmation of the first account.

"He has left the house with those men, to a certainty," said the old priest.

"Murther, an' God help us!" cried Mr. Cotteril, as he entered, in perturbation, yet not forgetful altogether of his usual reflective pace, and, as he styled them, 'his asy, quite civiliments,'—"the Lord's blessin' be about all within and without here! God save ye, God save ye, neighbours, every one!" softly clapping his hands, as he pressed into the middle of the now altered festive hall, if we may be allowed so to name Michael Tobin's barn. Notwithstanding his blandness, there was a mixture of terror in his countenance that made

him look like a frightened ox; while five or six servants and helpers who accompanied him, showed the like symptoms of agitation. "Where's the poor masther, neighbours, dear?" Mr. Cotteril continued;—"oh, Miss Nelly, my pettheen, there's bad work done!"

The throng gathered round the other servants, who were immediately engaged in giving vociferous and clamorous accounts of the occurrence they had to detail; often interrupting each other, as one thought his fellow related the tale the wrong way, or did not begin it at the right end. The land-steward continued to address himself to his young lady.

"Oh, Miss Nelly, Miss Nelly, where's the masther, till I tell him, afther a manner, the misfort'nate story?"

"What is it?" gasped Ellen.

"Long sorry is Bill Cottheril it's come to his turn to say sich things to you, Miss Ellen, pettheen; bud the grand fine plate is gone, every morsel in the wide world—and the last rents, likewise, that cum from the poor cratures o' tenants, and from their hard arnins the live-long day, the poor sowls, God relieve 'em!—" He made a pause here, that "the poor tenants" might have due opportunity to appreciate his kindness to them: but the winks and other signs which passed, unseen by him, among the poor tenants, who were listeners, seemed to argue that, notwithstanding all his tact, Mr. Cotteril and his smooth tongue went for little more than they were worth, in general estimation—"an' nothin' left," continued Mr. Cotteril, "bud the sthrong box in the closet, that was too heavy to take away, an' that they couldn't force wid their hommers, an' their sledges, an' their crows,—an' wicked did they curse, God forgive them, when they were put to id to lave the same behind."

Ellen's thoughts glanced from what she now heard, to the disappearance of her father; both events became connected in her mind, and she swooned in Kitty Tobin's arms.

"Who has done all this?" questioned Mr. Fenelly.

"Somehow or some-way, plase your reverence,"

bowing low, "Cushneiche is the lad that done the work for us."

"How long ago?"

"I'm not over-bright in myself at any time, somehow or someway, plase your reverence, an' what little share o' sense God ga' me, departed from me, a'most out-an'-out; but I'd make bould to say it's goin' on an hour, or there-away, sence they left us all tied up in a bundle, afther they had their good will o' the place: an' it's only now, afther a manner, somehow, we got loose, wid God's help, an' set out here to look for the poor masther: musha, plase your reverence, where is he, entirely?"

Mr. Fenelly related the fact of Mr. Pratt's unaccountable disappearance.

"Lord save us all, agin!—was one iv 'em a weeny, middle-aged man, wid a green coat on his back, an' a black plasther on his eye?"

"You describe him, exactly."

"Then, by the G——!" sounding one palm against another—"Cushneiche has a hoult o' the masther, into the bargain."

While a murmur of astonishment and fear ran through the barn, Mr. Cotteril, suddenly recollecting in whose presence he stood, bowed low, crossed his forehead with such fervour as to leave the mark of his thumb nail behind, and added—

"The Lord be good to us an' save us!—see what I said;—to go an' give a curse, the first time o' my life; for it's a way wid me to be asy an' quite, your reverence, an' I ax your reverence's thousand pardons."

Mr. Fenelly, not heeding him, inquired for the note Ellen had taken from the stranger.

Miss D'Arnell, who, along with Kitty, now attended to the insensible girl, stooped, and picked it up from the floor. The priest saw it had no direction on the back. He tore it open, and read aloud, that his coadjutor and Miss D'Arnell might hear him—

"To Miss Ellen,—Do not be frightened—your father shall not be injured. "CUSHNEICHE,
"REDMOND."

The last signature was announced by Mr. Fenelly, after much hesitation.

"Redmond!" echoed Miss D'Arnell,—"that is false;—the note is a forgery—or his name, at least, is forged to it;"—she had started up, completely off her guard. The priest approached her.

"Patience, my child," he said,—"patience: and now, this is no place for you to stay; we must get a number of the men present to join your own servant in seeing you safe at home;—more of them will be required to protect your poor little friend here," pointing to Ellen,—"and the rest shall come with me and Cotteril to seek out Mr. Pratt, and, if possible, get an explanation of *all* the circumstances of this extraordinary business."

"Thanks, Sir—dear Sir—for your care and attention;—*allons, ma mere,*" to the bewildered old attendant. "Oh, Sir, can you believe it of the unhappy young man?"

"I cannot—I do not; yet I know not what to say. Are you sure, my dear, you saw him at the window?"

"Good heaven! that brings terrible confirmation;—I *am* sure, Sir—Good night, good night—farewell, good young woman," to Kitty, "and I wish you all happiness, and am sorry for this trouble on your wedding-night."

"It's no throuble in life, Miss," put in Ristharde, coming to his wife's side—"divil a throuble, Kitty, a-chorra," whispering her; "an' I'll tell why another time—an' you know where," smiling roguishly.

Kitty stared at him.

"Give my love and compliments to Miss Pratt," continued the young lady, "and say I hope and will pray her father may soon be restored to her:—Ah, she revives—farewell, dear Miss Pratt!"—her feelings had broken down the barriers of pride and rivalry, and taught her to sympathize with poor Ellen—"farewell!" kissing her—"I would stay to see you quite recovered, if I dared; or if Mr. Fenelly would permit or advise it. God be with you."

Miss D'Arnell hurried out of the barn, giving her

arm to the old lady, and attended by her servant, and the formidable posse the priest had already appointed to be her body-guard on the road home. Seated in her saddle, she gave the rein to her fleet little steed, and set off from the farmer's house in the precipitancy of unchecked and powerful emotion. Her servant called after her to announce, respectfully, that *madame* was not yet secure on her pillion, and he, therefore, not in readiness to attend her. The fiery young lady heard or heeded him not, but continued her gallop down the bosheen to the main road; and as none of her rustic guards were mounted, having not contemplated a necessity for such great dispatch, she was therefore alone.

At a short distance from the end of the lane, a man sprang over the fence, and flung himself before her horse. He was haggard and agitated, and the moonlight showed his dress to be soiled and torn. Miss D'Arnell knew him at a glance, and pulled up.

"Redmond!" she cried.

"That wretch—that outcast!" he answered, "who only seizes this opportunity to see you, for the last time—hear the sound of your voice, for the last time."

"All is true then?"

"The worst you can have heard of me is true," he answered. "I stand before you a branded man—the blood of a felon in my veins—a creature whom it is disgrace to have known—whom it would be destruction to know any longer—an accursed being! hurled, in one hour, from the height of worldly character, of youthful hopes—and oh, more than all—of the chance of an angel's love—down to the very lowest depths of infamy. Farewell! farewell!—forget me, for ever!—call our intimacy a hideous dream, from which you have just awaked. You can never see me again—I shudder at the thought—farewell!" He was rushing from her—

"Stay, a moment!" she cried—"only one question—what is your present situation?—do you allow this dreadful discovery to sink you, by your own actions, lower than *it* could?—where have you been lurking?—

how engaged?—with whom? unhappy Redmond, with whom? Answer me—what brought you to the barn?—did you know of the robber's intention to take off your guardian?"

"I did. And now, at least, you will not bid me stay; nor can I, if you bid me. I hear the noise of the pursuit that outlaws tremble to hear, and I must fly from it—here come your friends, and—along with all the world—my persecutors;—I say, Rosalie D'Arnell, we part, this night, for ever."

He darted over the fence at the side opposite that from which he had appeared, and was quickly lost to view; diving down the inequalities that fell to the river. Her servant and the peasants came up, and escorted by them, she now rode home slowly and silently.

CHAPTER VI.

COTTERIL'S account of his observations of Redmond upon the night he left Mr. Pratt's house; the allusions of the two old men on the village bridge, and, indeed, the young man's last appearance, and his own acknowledgments, seem to require a plain and speedy detail (for we dislike unnecessary mystery) of his real adventures and conduct since the first evening he and the reader parted company.

Educated and brought up in liebral feelings, confirmed in them by liberal association, and a sense, however vague, of rank and place in the world, it will not be wondered at, that the brief explanation Redmond finally compelled his guardian to yield, upon the evening of their last interview, should have produced in the youth's bosom the kind of frenzy which has been noticed. The sudden shock acted, too, upon a nature, not of the gentlest, though, in many respects, of the noblest description, and was therefore felt more violently.

Mr. Pratt has called Redmond "dark;" and, with some allowances for exaggeration, it is admitted that the commentator was, in a degree, right in his view of character. Perhaps strong minds and hearts generally show less of amiable evenness, than weaker or softer ones: at all events, there was about this boy's temper a something that would not invariably bend to confidential freedom with all who thought they had a right, either on account of youthful equality, or of years and relative situation, to expect it from him. He was not impatient or hasty: few ever saw him in a passion; he was not gloomy, even; for he would race after the hurling-ball, and shout as he struck it high, and take or give a fall in wrestling during the game, as heartily and as laughingly as any of the neighbouring peasant-lads, with whom he condescended to mingle in the truly national sport. His jest, and smile, and wink, and perhaps something else, used to be ready, too, for every red-cheeked country-girl that tripped by him on the road, or in the field, during a day's shooting or coursing; and in a summer meadow he was that kind of person who would tumble about in the new hay, playing with a child; but also that kind of a person who did not lower himself by the vagary, and who would not allow any man to play with him, when his gambol with the child was over.

While amusing conversation went on at table around him, Mr. Pratt and others have often vainly asked Redmond, why he was abstracted? or why, when every one else laughed, he looked grave? or, on the contrary, why, when all were wrapped in some serious topic, he alone smiled? He would, on such occasions, merely answer, that he was unconscious of what they taxed him with—and he was; for the long, vague look, or the faint smile, just moving the closed lips, were evidently but mechanical responses to the mind's gaze upon some difficult question; or to its glow over recollected or anticipated happiness; or, perhaps, to its indifference or contempt of something past by, or yet to come;—none of which lapses it would, had it been conscious of the outside show, have naturally trusted to observation.

It might be, that thoughts, irresistible at his age, upon his prospects, his pretensions—and thence upon the question of his parentage, only now called up with vigour, had lately given a more decided turn to this complexional reserve or depth of character. And again, the ever-recurring image of the lady whom he had dared, within the last year, to love—and the incessant reference from her to his future hopes of possessing her, continually kept him agitated, with, for the first time in his life, reveries as selfish as they were absorbing.

It has been said that he was seldom seen in a passion; yet some have witnessed him in one; and then, the vehemence of the fit certainly balanced the virtue of its rare occurrence. If really stirred up, Redmond's frenzy shook him to the centre, terrified all around him, and, working his body like a machine, flung him headlong, he knew not whither, upon the first course that presented itself. And if, in earlier boyhood, such had been the effect of his constitutional temper, on but slight occasions, we can more easily conceive the excess of passion that, on the present, sent him bursting out of his guardian's house, late at night, with cries and imprecations on his lips, joined to deeply-muttered vows, never again to cross its threshold.

It is true that, as Cotteril has related, he first took the level road to the village: and, indeed, for once in his life, at least, that person has already given to Mr. Pratt a pretty true account of such of Redmond's conduct as came under his observation. The despairing boy ran, bounded forward, until a recollection that he was hastening to face the village crowds, whose regards and whispers he could not now encounter, checked his speed, and, after a wild inquiring look around, urged him to cast himself by the road-side, in a fit of complete abandonment. Here the broken, but beautiful image of another person started across his mind; again he sprang up, cursing his birth, and the unknown parent who had left him to disgrace and misery, and ran against the rising ground at his left hand.

This was the hill spoken of by Cotteril. The carriage road to the village curved round it. A second road, narrow, rugged, and strewed with stones and rocks, led, as he and some other wise persons thought, in a shorter line to the same place, mounting boldly almost to the summit of the hill. But from the point at which Redmond began to ascend, there was neither road nor path; and he held his way, through clumps of furze and briars, at right angles with the course in which Cotteril was racing to intercept him. He wanted no path that might conduct him to the dwellings of his fellow-creatures, or bring him in contact with them. He only cared to recollect that the top of the ascent, some distance across the climbing road, was lonesome, untenanted, and uninhabited; and that there he could fling himself down, and indulge his present mood. Through every obstacle, he soon cleared the steep of the eminence, shot over the narrow road, bounded upon some rude fences of dry stones, pressed against the last piece of sloping ground, and found himself in the midst of a flat stretch of, as he had anticipated, waste land, which formed the summit. On every side, furze, rushes, brambles, and other bushes, were grouped, in clumps, with large stones, black under the shadow of night, or, here and there, with upright conical rocks, splintered at top, and cleft asunder —the protrusions or extremities, perhaps, of more enormous masses buried in the hill. Under his feet there was, in one place, soft, elastic sward, made by a depth of moss, and ages of decayed vegetation, and, in another, patches of slaty rock, bedded in the soil, and level with it. Redmond threw one glance around, to select, for his solitary and misanthropic retreat, the meetest spot; and, as if satisfied with his scrutiny, was springing on, when his toe touched something soft, amid a large tuft of furze and rushes, and he was sent staggering forward.

Ere he had recovered himself, a man, starting from the tuft, confronted him, and in an easy yet peculiar tone, said, "*Bannochth-lath*, gossip."

"Fool!" growled Redmond, as he turned to hasten

from him; "what sent you here, at this time of the night?"

"The thing that didn't send yourself, if a body is to judge by the hurry you're in, an' the way you have with you," answered the man;—"the sleep sent me here; an' it was on me when your foot kicked me to waken me, I thank you."

"You came to sleep *here?* in such a place as this?—You have no roof to cover you, then?—you are poor—a wretch and an outcast?"

"No roof to cover me?—that's a small mistake; I have, many's the one."

"Go home, then, and snore under it; this is no haunt for you: good night, fellow," said Redmond.

"A good night, then: but stop a bit, if you plase; just a neighbour's word with you," walking quickly after him.

"Well, man?"—stopping and fiercely facing the stranger.

"Here it is," replied the other, presenting a long-barrelled pistol—"here it is," jocosely repeating the words as he cocked it, "an' all it'll be axin' o' you is whatever thrifle you have in your pockets—asy now!"—as, with an exclamation of "Rascal!" and a sudden spring and blow, Redmond darted on him, knocked the weapon out of his hand, and brought him to the ground. Indeed, in a contest of bodily strength, his low and light-built antagonist had little chance against Redmond's great height, nerve, and vigour, assisted as he was by the desperation that now maddened him.

"You done it, faith," said the man, slowly rising; "an' now, don't be tellin' it to the counthry, wide; to get me into more disgrace than ever fell on me afore, on Ireland's ground, or in other places that ar'n't in Ireland, maybe:—for the divil a mother's son, barrin' yourself—"

"Here, fellow," interrupted Redmond, throwing him all the money he could find in his pocket, "never say that it was in defence of this trash I soiled my hands with you—and, after all, perhaps you want it: good night again."

"Stop, a-bouchal, stop,"—gathering up the pieces,—"stop, an' this is the second time I bid you; if I take one o' them from you *now*, may they walk down my throath afther the manner of a——stop, I say!—stop, now, in arnest!"—he held close to his vision one of the pieces, and, in the weak light of the rising and clouded moon, seemed to examine it very anxiously—"Mother o' Heaven! what's this? where did you make off this?"

"What? what, man?"—Redmond returned quickly to his side, and also peered at the coin.—"Give it me!" he resumed, furiously, after a second's observation—"I didn't intend to part with that: give it, or—"

"Arragh, bother, to be sure I will, as well as all the rest: but how cum it into your hands? that's all I want to know; an' isn't it a civil question?"

"No, man!—it's an impertinent question—why should you ask? don't you see the piece is not one of the coin of these countries—perhaps not a coin of any country?—go home; farewell;"—he now had it again in his possession.

"No, faith; nor a coin at all, maybe," resumed the man; "only a family keepsake, like, an' what we believe they calls a meddle: but there's a kind of a notion cum into my head that I seen it afore now;"—he continued to walk after Redmond as he spoke:—"an', moreover, if *you* got it from the right hand, or in the right way, there's another sort of a notion come across me, that I could tell you something of the friend that gave it to you."

Redmond started and stopped. The medal had, indeed, been his from infancy; but he knew not to whom he was indebted for it, although, within the last year, he had often dwelt on the hope of being able to trace the donor.

"What friend do you mean? supposing you right or wrong in your notions, what was that friend to me?"

"Why, nothing more nor the misfortunite man they called your father."

The bolt of flame suddenly bursting before his eyes in the darkness of night, could not have more stunned Redmond, than did this answer, carelessly and lightly worded as it was. He turned, and gazed upon his follower in breathless consternation. In a moment, however, the tide of his former frenzy rushed back with increased swell; and, partly maddened by impatience for an explanation, partly by a sudden fear that the speaker, already aware of his shame, meant but to jeer and taunt him, he once more sprang upon his chance companion, collaring him and shaking him as he cried—

"Ruffian! if you cannot—do not fully explain that word—instantly, too, and to my satisfaction—by all—"

"Fire and blazes! let me go, boy!" cried the man, suddenly and with great agility freeing himself, while his manner showed a dangerous irritation and fierceness that had a mixture of the snarling terrier and the tiger-cat in it,—"keep your hands from me, I say, or, afther all, it may be the worse for you; I have another spakin'-thrumpet left, let alone a little thing that never misses fire;—keep back, I bid you! was there ever sich a born fool? you don't know, man, into what a scrape one whistle on my little finger can bring you: be quiet, an' let us talk; I'm used to have my word obeyed; an' you, of all livin' cratures, have a right to mind it; stand where you are, gorçoon, and listen to me well."

"I stand, fellow, not on account of your absurd threats, but to hear you speak—and you are yet within my reach—and yet I warn you, that if you do not fully explain your random word—and in explaining it, if a syllable escapes you concerning the man you must prove to be the man you mentioned—a syllable of slight or reproach which you cannot also make good—or more—a syllable giving account of wrong done upon him, to the authors of which you do not instantly direct my vengeance; if one of these conditions be forgot by you, prepare yourself. We are alone on this hill; that's enough;—you know what I mean."

"Well," answered the other cooly, as, his head bent, he seemed to arrange his thoughts to some pressing purpose.

"Go on!" resumed Redmond, while the man was still silent.

"Yes—there it is," muttered the stranger, evidently coming to a point with himself; "that's it. I will go on, poor gorçoon; only you'll be sorry, afore I'm done, for callin' me them names, an' for the little thrial between us at the first goin' off, too. An' you must have rason, now; an' sense to undherstand that, afore I open my mind to you, it's only fair an' allowable I'd be sure you're the man I'd take you for."

"Be it so: but speak quickly."

"Very well. Now we only start from the post, over again. Where did you get this goold meddle?"

"I suppose I must answer you. When I was an infant, sent to nurse to a poor cabin in this neighbourhood, it hung round my neck; the woman who nursed me deprived me of it, while I was too young to be conscious of the theft. Many years after, her daughter, my foster-sister, learned from conversations between her father and mother that it belonged to me; and, as the poor girl loved me, and moreover pitied me on account of a question concerning my parentage, which she saw weighed down my heart, the medal returned, by her means, into my possession. Now for *your* story."

"It's soon tould. You're no other than the young boy that was brought up in the attorney's big house, beyant, it seems, then?"

"Fellow, you trifle with me. Every one in the neighbourhood knows that, only too well."

"Don't be callin' me them names, avich, I bid you again. An' I, for one, never knew you, to see you, afore this night; though that wasn't my fault: for many's the long mile by sey an' land, I thravelled to find you out; an' at last, when I come to these parts, you were in Dublin, they tould me, and I thought you in it still. Sure, you can't be at home more nor a day or two."

"No longer. But what is all this to the question? Why did you come to find me out, as you call it? What business had you with me?"

"A thrifle. I made my way here to claim a good estate for you, ma-bouchal; an', afther that, to put in a little claim for you, to yourself, on my own account, —och, Redmond, a-chorra, where's the hand?" He advanced, extending his arm, as if, in accordance with his words, he sought to give and take a greeting. Redmond stepped back.

"An estate for me? and to put in a claim for me? What is this folly? Man, do you presume—do you dare to trifle with me? Have a care; you can't guess in how ill a humour I am to bear it. An estate? what estate?

"The house an' lands that Pratt houlds."

"Take care, I again warn you: you mean to insinuate then that I am that man's son—his base bastard, perhaps?"

"God forbid, avich: an' yet, bad as he is, I'm afeard the world won't allow your father to be much a betther man."

"Scoundrel! there's the word I cautioned you against; and now make it good, or——go on! how has my father become a mark for the world's censure? Heaven of heavens! Pratt's story is true then. Man! who was that father?"

"He that hung the little meddle round your neck, Redmond, avich, when he put you into Pratt's care, an' your good estate too—an' that can tell you every letther an' mark on the meddle, though he might only have it in his hands in the dark o' the night, when the best eye-sighth 'ud fail in makin' em out; an' no other, Redmond, ma-bouchal, are you to take the story from."

"Furies! what mean you?"—a terrible misgiving setting him wild;—"name the name of the person you call my father. Is he alive? where is he? how situated?"

"Alive, an' not far from you, Redmond, a-graw, an'—but this is the sorest part to you—the neighbours call him one Cushneiche."

Without attempting to describe the feelings in Redmond's bosom, we shall only mention that, at an announcement so terrible, he was deprived of all power of utterance, silently and quickly falling back still farther from the speaker.

"An' there's no hand for me yet?" resumed his companion, after a pause, in a softened and reproachful tone: "Redmond, a-vourneen, flesh an' blood sees nothin' to hate in its own misfort'nes or misdoin's; it forgives an' forgets all to its own kin."

"You are the person you have named then?" inquired Redmond, his voice sounding low and hollow, as he hugged his arms hard across his breast.

"I'm myself at laste, a-chorra, an' nothin' more or less to you than your own poor father."

"Stop!—you must prove your right to that word before you use it;—you must show me, clearly and circumstantially, how it could have happened;—you must not leave a hair's-breadth of doubt unremoved. I hear but your assertion, wretched man, and scorn it. Though it leaves me here shaking with a dread never known before, I scorn it! But let me have the proof, I say! show me, as clear as the day that will surely come, how it is I am—God of heaven! what I cannot utter!—how it is I—*I*——mercy, mercy, Great Lord of the world! mercy only in that!" the miserable boy fell on his feeble knees: "or, before it comes—death! death! Before it is known—before *she* hears it—Common Parent, show me mercy!—No!" he started up distracted—"I do not believe it—it cannot, shall not be true!—hell and flames!—Rosalie!—it shall not!—or come!—rather than that it should—rather than that—*that!*"—groping for the pistol he had knocked out of Cushneiche's hand, he tottered headlong, and fell exhausted.

The old robber stooped over him, and by a succession of soothing words tried, in his own way, to administer relief and consolation, at the same time raising Redmond's head. As soon as the youth grew conscious that his hands were round him, he again sprang to his feet.

"I say, man, it is as false as the hell you shall suffer for it! Ah!" screaming, as a sudden thought came —"I see it now! you bring me a confirmation of Pratt's story, because you have been set on by him."

"Set on by *him*?" repeated Cushneiche angrily; "set on by the fellow I'm come here only to bring to his long account? By him that has wronged us both? that thinks to keep your own from you, Redmond, a-vich, and that is the cause—or *I* wrong *him* much—why the father an' son were even forced to part, an' one sent on the road to evil doins, an' the other made his household dog? Avoch, poor boy, hear rason. I never knew you, I say, or what you war like, in the face or the limbs, till you crossed me on this hill to-night; or why I had the right to call you my own, till your own hand threw that token on the ground."

"How am I sure of that? how can I tell but——"

"Wait, a-cuishla: do you remember my first salute to you? do you remember the pistol at your head? if I was set on you, or knew my own child, is that the way I'd come up to him?"

Redmond groaned in confirmed though less furious agony, and again his clasped hands and upturned eyes appealed to heaven.

"An' it's the heavy sorrow is on my heart, Redmond," resumed Cushneiche, "to be sich a father to ich a son; one that desarves the first and best man of his wide world to call him his child; but wait, a-vich, tell you again. Myself is nothin' to myself, now; ou, Redmond, it's you is to be considhered; and for he same rason, let the world never know we are kith r kin. Let me stay here only till sich time as the uld attorney 'll be made to give you your own, an' hen no matther what corner provides me rest an' pace at last."

"Unhappy old man—wretched father! to whom, if this indeed be true, your child can never be a child—do not talk to me of estate, or wealth, or rank; talk to me only of all that can prove your horrible claim to my connexion with you—to my blood, the blood that

runs in my veins; and if on that point you speak clearly ——no matter; I listen to you."

"Well, my poor gorçoon; first an' foremost, I can tell you the marks an' tokens on the little bit o' goold; then, I can tell the day an' place I gave you up to Pratt; afther that, I can tell you how much land I paid him hard money for, on your account; an' to make my ending good——"

"These are still but your own assertions. Have you no witness to them?"

"Asy, a-vich; to make my endin' good, I can bring him to your face, with the Lord's help, an' if I'm a live man; when, if he doesn't uphould my story, through his own mouth, an' by rason of the little way we'll argufy it with him, why then, Redmond, a-roon, the red duoul take the liars, that's all; an' I have no witnesses to show you."

"Impostor—though I know not why you should join in such a plot—yet, wretched impostor as you are, can you expect me to consign myself to perdition by believing you on a case so flimsy? or expect me to check the returning joy I now feel at detecting you out of your own showing?"

"How, Redmond, ma-bouchal?"

"How? If—I will not say if—but since you *have* been hired by Pratt to destroy me—though I repeat I know not why—with this fable, what else should he do but confirm his own statement?"

"Asy again, man. Supposin', at the same time, we make him deliver up to you, saled an' signed, the parchments that gives you a right an' title to every sod he houlds, an' laves himself without a shilhin', a beggar on the face o' the earth,—would that be like the thing? would that show him an' me to be cullodgin together? would that make it rasonable for him to tell a false story, that, when once tould——"

"By the eternal!" interrupted Redmond, stamping furiously, "you shall do it, then, or you and I have but a measured time of this life! and when you have done it—for one of us, at least," sinking in his furious tone, "the time shall still be measured."

"I'll do it, Redmond; an' no need, a-hager, of threatenin' me or yourself on the head of it, either. Mind what I say. I know your father is a shame to you, but he'll dhraw far off as soon as you're righted, an' no one the wiser who or what he is; an' Pratt can asily be bribed to hould his tongue; an' then you'll have your good lands an' house to yourself, an'——"

"No more of this, I repeat—not another word of such dreadful mockery. The only thing you and I can now allude to, is the proof of your story; the only thing I want to know is, that you, a highway robber and outlaw, have indeed the right to call me by the name you presume to apply to me. Your former history, your family, your early pursuits, or the circumstances that made you what you are—even these points I fly from at present, as, until the time and place of your explanation, I fly from you; and when you tell me of that time and place, our meeting ends. So, where am I to witness Pratt's admissions? how, circumstanced as you are, warring with the laws of your country, do you propose to obtain an interview with him?"

"Don't fear me much on the head o' that. It'll jest all happen out of his own house (that isn't his own), an' in one o' mine. He's mighty shy o' me, I know, though not on this account, an' we must watch an' wait a little, to find him free of his faction; but it's a thing to be done, plase God, for all his cuteness."

"You mean to force him into one of your haunts?"

"Why, then, I believe you said it, Redmond, a-vich."

"If so, remember I am no party to your outrage."

"Never fear; an' God forbid I axed you, Redmond; only meet us, the present night week—"

"A week? do you think to put me off so long? Do you think I can be paltered with so long?"

"Asy, good boy; the bird isn't to be caught sooner. He must be clear of his faction, I tell you; an' it 'll happen in this way. To-day-morning, as we hear, a gossip o' mine went to give him the invite to his weddin', for the evenin' I tould you of; he'll come to the

house in the day-light, with few of his people about him; my gossip, out o' love to you, becase out o' love to your fosther-sisther—"

"What? are you speaking of Ristharde Roach?"

"Whisht, a-bouchal; it's not manners to call people's names, at the prasent time o' the night;—an' there's some things to be let into one ear, an' out through the other: never mind axin' too many questions; only, my poor gossip, I say, 'ill give no hendrance, if he gives no help, when Pratt is onet in the barun; an', as I said afore, you'll have only to meet us, about nine o'clock, outside o' the place, an', when we get him into our company, folly us, accordin' to your likin', over the road we'll be for axin' him to come."

"Supposing me to comply with your lawless arrangements, to which, I once more warn you, I am and shall be no party—do you expect to find in his pocket the documentary proof you spoke of? The title-deeds, as I understand you? and the only proof which I will take to be undeniable?"

"No; he wouldn't hawk 'em about with him, I'm thinkin'; but a body may go look for them, afore givin' himself a call. Don't fear us, my poor boy; you'll get the satisfaction you want."

"Farewell, then—" He was turning off after a pause.

"Avoch, Redmond, is this the way you lave me?" Cushneiche again held out his hand.

"No, wretched creature!" said Redmond—"even supposing your tale true and proved, no, no I say!"—Even supposing Nature to have originally given you over me the near claim you say you possess, still, from my earliest infancy, you abandoned that claim—you left me to my own fortune and chance—for twenty years——"

"Listen to the rason for that."

"Not a word!—'tis useless, and will but prolong an intercourse I shrink from. Say you never had deserted your child, your present course of life cuts asunder, for ever, any accidental relationship. The Commandment cannot mean to bind a son of honour and honesty

to love or honour a——Oh Merciful Heaven!—Unnatural, as well as degraded man!—it would have been a mercy if you kept me by your side, even to familiarize me to your own life—even to corrupt and harden my heart—to teach me to sink myself for ever, that so I might be blind to your character, and that the robber-son might acknowledge the robber-father, as the tiger-whelp in the forest his tiger-sire.—Yes, compared to the ruin you now bring upon me—the horrid struggle you have aroused in my breast—the despair and scalding anguish"—his voice became shrill, as burning tears found their way—"compared to this and more, any thing would have been mercy.—Touch your felon hand? take it in mine? No!—Keep your appointment: I will be punctual, if I can bear life so long."

He plunged down the side of the hill opposite to that which he had ascended; at the bottom, again met the level road to the village, which, as has been noticed, swept all round the eminence; bounded over it, with an eager and fearful look to the right and to the left, to note if he was observed; then down sloping grounds, to the river side; along by the water's brink to the village bridge; and, stealthily passing it, continued his course at the other side of the river, towards the group of ruins in one of which Padhre-na-Moulh usually lived.

CHAPTER VII.

It was Redmond's intention, if, indeed, any impulse of his present mood can be called an intention, to seek an interview with Padhre-na-Moulh. From many former little incidents, he had been led to entertain a vague notion that the hermit knew, or, allowing for his attributed wanderings of brain, fancied he knew something about him, in reference to his birth. The

youth, during early childhood, became familiarized to the person of Peter, who constantly walked into the cabin where he was at nurse, silently begging a little food; afterwards, they often met by the river's side, or on some other of the poor mendicant's lonesome walks; and it was observed that Peter never appeared near him without showing, by gestures or action, an unusual interest. Sometimes he would, in passing, lay his hand on the child's head; sometimes stop suddenly before him, and kneel as if in prayer for his welfare: and Redmond had a lively recollection of once crossing, at about six years of age, the wanderer's path, in a solitary place, when no third person was near, and when Peter, after first kneeling by his side and holding his hand, took him gently into his arms, and while tears ran down his cheeks, and low sobs and moanings escaped him, pressed the boy tenderly to his heart.

Redmond was sent to school, and afterwards to college; of course, their meetings became less frequent; indeed years often lapsed without one; and the youth remembered only as incoherent passages of his childhood, the notice and attention of his strange acquaintance and patron. Before his last return to the University, something occurred, however, to cast back his mind over those half-forgotten days and circumstances. Ellen and he were out rambling among the hills, and had sat down to rest, in the middle of a waste moor, when Peter suddenly approached them, alone. Their hands had been innocently clasped, before his appearance, and now were quickly withdrawn from each other. But, walking up to them, with, as usual, his eyes fixed on the ground, the mendicant, when they had bid him good-morrow, and when he had lowly bowed his head in acknowledgment, gently took a hand in each of his, again joined them, knelt, as if to invoke happiness on the union he would thus seem to propose, and left the boy and girl, as suddenly as he had come up, to recover, as well as they could, from the blushing confusion his singular conduct had caused.

About a year after, Redmond was still more interested by a rencounter with Peter. At this time he

had seen Miss D'Arnell, and could think of nothing but her. It was a fine day, and he reclined, alone, on the bank of the river, idly, but, since the time of Shakspeare's Orlando, at least, allowedly indulging the old lover-trick of forming the initial of his lady's name in the smooth sand that filled a little river-creek near him, now left dry in the summer weather. So, R, R, R, for Rosalie was flourished, with his finger, all over the shining tablet; when, looking up, he half-blushed to find himself detected in his pastime by old Padhre-na-Moulh, who stood, immediately over him, gazing down at his work.

"Well, good Peter, and how do you like it?" asked Redmond, not in a pleased tone. The mendicant shook his head, in evident token of not liking it at all; and then stooped, smoothened the sand with the palm of his hand, and, using the point of his staff, described, much to Redmond's surprise, a well-shaped E, in lieu of every R he had defaced. After a pause, Redmond said, smiling, "No, no, Father Peter; it must be this letter;" and in his turn, he smoothened the primitive page, and restored the original characters. But Peter shook his head more earnestly than before—Redmond thought he even frowned—and, again stooping, wrote E, E, E, inscribing the letters deeply into the sand, and, when he had done, pointing towards Mr. Pratt's house, and signifying, by proper gestures, that Redmond should seek in it a subject for his alphabetic muse.

"Indeed, Pahre? and why so?"—

A third time the mendicant prepared the sand for a new text, and wrote—"It is commanded."

"Ay, Padhre!" resumed the youth; "and by whom commanded, pray?"

His strange companion remained as if he had not heard the question.

"Who has the right to command me in such a matter, Peter? Do you know I am an orphan, without natural guardians, and such as might claim the right?" Still no motion gave an answer to his questions. "I say, Peter, no human creature lives qualified to control me, in any thing I choose to do or to fancy."

At last Peter seemed to hear. Once again he made the sand level, and inscribed upon it—"Yes—there live those whose bidding you should heed;" and while Redmond, with extreme wonder, pored over the sentence, Peter suddenly walked away, nor could entreaties draw him back.

For some time the incident left a strong impression on Redmond's mind, and he afterwards threw himself more than once in Peter's way, in order to obtain, if possible, an explanation of the last words written on the sand. But the mendicant would not attend to his questions, and, if closely pressed, only pointed solemnly, and with a show of earnest exhortation, to Pratt's house, and renewed his signs that there, and there only, Redmond was to bestow his affections. This obstinacy at first irritated him; and then, as time wore away, (much of it in the company of Rosalie,) and as he began to recollect the rumour, credited by the more reflecting people in the neighbourhood, of Peter's insanity, he tried to dismiss all idea of the occurrence as one which ought rationally to interest him. The poor man's early notice of him could have been nothing, Redmond, argued, but an arbitrary impulse of his weak mind; and, working up his own prepossession, Peter had now merely invested himself with a right to dictate to his protégé upon some whim, of which the solution could only be found in the incongruities common to madness.

Yet after the receipt of the note from Count O'Ruark, the finding of the scrap of Mrs. Pratt's letter, and, particularly, after the sudden declaration of his guardian, which had sent him raving out of the house, Redmond's thoughts went back, in spite of him, to his interview with Peter by the river side: as he clambered up the hill, upon this night, an impulse again to challenge the solitary, in his ruined abode, often occurred, and now, giving way to what, in a calmer moment, he would have thought a weakness, the youth rapidly, though stealthily, pursued his broken path to the old castles.

He soon gained them. They lay within a short distance of the water, occupying about an acre of ground,

which was left untilled and neglected, and as if delivered up, in reverence or fear, to be a domain unto the relics of former times. Heaps of their own stones and rubbish, that, during century after century, had become piled around them, were, in many places, now clothed with soil and long grass and weeds, so as to give the appearance of natural little hillocks, which grouped, irregularly but pleasingly, with the ruins that still endured. Indeed, as has before been said, the ground all about them had gradually risen so high, that a good portion of their bases were buried in it.

As Redmond hastily stepped into the little solitary region, the objects which first confronted him were two detached portions of arched aisles, blackly relieved against the less deep sky, and allowing passage, through their arches, to floods of watery moonshine, that came bursting, now and then, from wreaths of low, racking clouds. These ran at right angles with each other, and yet might once have been but parts of one connected pile; over them, at some distance, arose the pinnacled and shivered heads of two or three square towers or castles,—also standing out blacker than the heavens, and admitting weak gleams through their pointed windows and cracks. To his right and left arose others, of a similar shape, half light, half shadow, whenever the fitful moonbeams fell on them; and at his back, as he entered the place of ruins, was the peculiarly-shaped, square castle, most fully catching the intermittent ray, because directly facing its source, in which, as he had often been told, the solitary resided. No pathway was distinguishable through the encumbered and tangled ground; and it was overspread by a deep and melancholy silence, that, at every step he took, seemed to become dismally broken up by the murmuring or whispering echoes.

Stumbling over the inequalities we have described, and among loose stones and prickly weeds, or slippery grass, Redmond found his way to the base of Padhre's castle. He looked up, hoping to catch a red gleam from its windows and slits, that might announce an inhabitant within:—no light appeared through any

of the blank orifices. He walked round the building, in search of a door or entrance:—none met his eye, upon a level with his feet; and a little more observation showed him that the rugged and abrupt ascent up which he was obliged to clamber to the castle, was, as before generally noticed with respect to all the others, a heap of its own fragments, that, in course of time, had mounted higher than the original doorway, completely blocking it up from use or view. But at one side of the square ruin he saw a large window-hole, also square, to be gained by a little climbing, and which, from stepping marks under it, and the polish on its lower edge, seemed constantly in use as the entrance to the building.

With slight exertion, Redmond got in at this window, and found himself upon a narrow, corkscrew kind of stairs, continuing above him, as the partial and flitting moonbeams allowed him to observe, and also twining downward from where he stood, into, as he rightly supposed, the ground-floor of the castle. It struck him that Padhre was most likely to choose for his retreat this lower and obscured region, which, from the pilings of stones and rubbish abroad, might now be regarded as a kind of subterraneous cell; and acting upon this idea, he descended the steps.

As he looked down to measure his way, he could not see where, or in what manner they ended; for, at the distance of a few yards, impenetrable darkness baffled his eye, the stairs seeming to rest upon a void, or to become gradually shadowed into it. Cautiously, therefore, Redmond descended, placing his feet firmly, and clinging to rude projections in the rough wall, at one side. After making some progress, he stumbled over a confused and broken mass, and fell. His first apprehension was that a breach had occurred in the steps, and that he should be precipitated headlong to the bottom: but he soon assured himself that he only lay prostrate among a heap of stones, which tumbling, from time to time, through the interior of the ruin, had, at this place, rolled down the stairs, choked them up, and forbid further progress towards the regions underneath.

Convinced that it was now useless to seek Peter any ere but in the upper part of the castle, Redmond mbled to his feet, and ascended the narrow stair-e. It led him into an apartment, the full extent of space enclosed by the building, of which the floor s earthen, the walls were bare and rough as the out-e of the castle, and which was rudely arched over-d, sustaining another floor. Through large open-s, at one side, the moon sent sufficient light to en-e Redmond, after he had looked close for some time, observe the features of the place. No human figure eared. In opposite corners were two beds of straw rushes, covered with coarse blankets, and fenced nd with hewn stones, visibly culled from the heap ruins below. He recollected the two old men who stantly attended on Padhre, and conjectured that s apartment, and these humble couches, were occu-d by them, rather than by him. He walked round the walls, expecting to discover a recess, but was appointed. Issuing from the chamber, he gained scanty landing-place, before the threshold of its r, square door-way, and observing that the twisting rcase continued upwards towards the top of the cas-mounted it.

He arrived at a second landing-place, and a second r, square door, that gave him entrance upon the or above the apartment he had just quitted. Here re no beds, and, except the swollen and toiling uds, no ceiling or covering. The earthen surface which he stood, was encumbered with the frag-nts of the flat roof, that long ago had tumbled in; the luxuriant crop of weeds which flourished ong the ruins, told that they were not of recent e.

In old castles of a similar kind, he had previously served the construction of the roof, or covering, to ve been a little elevated towards the centre, with, m that point, grooves diverging and running into a ne channel, which, attached to the walls of the ilding, received the waters that fell on the roof, and charged them outwardly, through vents in each

angle, upon the earth below; of such a roof the whole had, in the present case, given way, except that around two sides of the castle, the remains of the narrow water-course still projected—to Redmond's eye, as he gazed upward, very insecurely and scantily. But having ascertained that the uncovered chamber could not possibly shelter the hermit of the ruined abode, he issued out again, and ascended still higher.

With some caution, he stood upon the edge of the frail water-course, and looking across the space between him and the opposite wall, thought he perceived what he had been seeking, a recess, such as might afford concealment to the object of his search. He was now on the summit. At either angle were the fragments of pinnacles, and, connected with them, indented breast-work, which rose above the former level of the roof: but at the side he was to cross along the water-course, this rude battlement had almost wholly crumbled away, so as to afford little assistance, —in case of a false step,—against the chance of falling, inwardly, among the ruins below, or, outwardly, a fearful height, to the base of the castle. The grooved path had all the appearance, too, of being but slightly supported by its insertion into the wall, and might give way beneath the foot. Redmond had soon traversed it, however, and gained the point he wished to examine.

A bundle of hay, tied into a close, hard mass, filled up a little arched door-way, and must have been pulled with some effort into it, for Redmond found himself obliged to push violently before it yielded, and allowed him egress into a cell, formed half in the thickness of the wall, half in a semicircular projection, on the outside, and scarcely more than six feet long, and four in breadth. A loop-hole gave passage to a ray of moonlight; and the reflected light from the interior of the opposite wall of the castle, farther enabled him, now that the entrance was open, to discern objects. Padhre did not yet appear. His bed, of similar material and construction with those below, entirely occupied one end of the nook; at the other end was a deal box,

ly put together, upon which, from the polished ınce of the lid, it would seem he was in the ha- ıitting. It was not shut close, and, urged by an e of curiosity, Redmond opened it. A strange f things struck his view: some potatoes, raw ıled; some mouldy crusts of bread; a bottle of several pairs of musty old shoes; a large mis- ıch worn; a wooden crucifix, rudely carved, s by Peter's own hand; and a few curious arti- so probably the work of his hours of melancholy ıs, when the hand weakly followed the imbecile ings of the brain. One of these little matters an imitation of a pair of tongs, made by bend- ıpling ash until its points nearly met, then hard- t over a fire, and then paring and nicking it into hape with a knife; another gave the notion of l and masts of a ship; another of a pistol; all d. A wooden cup also appeared, together with nsy pocket knife which had been, perhaps, the only tool.

ıall niche in the wall next drew Redmond's eye. ıe door-way it was stuffed with a little bundle of He pulled this out; the place seemed empty. g through it, to assure himself whether or no it l any other curious article, he thought the stone, formed its bottom, slightly moved. He shook ne; found it loose; lifted it up between his and discovered another box, standing on end ing close, a good way down, in an excavation ınder it. With some difficulty Redmond next ed the box, which was long and rather weighty, ught it close under the ray that entered through p-hole. He reckoned to find it open, like the ut, although no lock appeared, it was tightly nly closed. It must be fastened by a spring, he t: nor was he mistaken; for, in pressing round his thumb, the lid started half open, and allowed iew of the contents—and these contents not a tonished him.

irst laid his hand on a closely-wedged row of gs, filled, as he ascertained, with Spanish crowns,

and gold pieces of various countries:—next, he drew out two cases of pistols, of different sizes, and richly mounted and inlaid, though tarnished by time; and next, a broad-leafed hat turned up in front, a cloak, a jacket or jerkin, small-clothes, hose, and half-boots with spurs. In disturbing the folds of the cloak, a dirk and a locket fell on the ground. Redmond caught up the latter, and rose to examine it under the full influence of the solitary moonbeam. At one side, it showed a tress of hair; at the other, initials which he could not decypher. Great curiosity possessed him at the discovery of this hidden treasure, and the matters that accompanied it, particularly the last. Bringing to mind the abject appearance Padhre always made, it was extraordinary to find such things in his possession. Were they his own? had they once belonged to him in a situation and character, which, for unknown reasons, he now voluntarily abandoned? or were they plunder —the evidences of a dark crime, for which, according to the village rumour, he had during twenty years offered, in his wretched and unsocial life, an expiation? The locket must have been, as almost all such things are, a little token of female affection. On whom first bestowed? on the present possessor, or some one from whom he had snatched it? And who was the giver? Redmond, in vague expectation, again peered closely at the initials, in the moon's ray, but with as little success as before.

A strong temptation arose in his mind to appropriate the locket for a time, examine it in the daylight, and when the letters were ascertained, try to draw from them, by reflection and inquiries, of what name and person they might be the remembrancer. Absorbed as he was in questions of self, exclusively, it was not surprising that, although unwarranted by any rational data, he should feel disposed to connect with his own mystery the present one. Padhre's early attentions to him also occurred to his heated mind in a shape more important than they had even before taken; and rapidly, though in a very obscure way, he linked together the hermit's fate and his own, and conjectured

that the locket was the clue to explain both. In this view, he became resolved to keep it for a few days; at his leisure he might return to the castle, while Padhre was again out, and replace it; and Redmond was hanging it round his neck, inside his vest, by a chain to which it appended, when the sound of heavy steps at a distance, calling out the echoes of the solitary little waste abroad, caused him, in some confusion, hastily to cram all the other articles into the box, shut down its spring lid, deposit it in its hiding-place, arrange the stone over it, stuff the little bundle of hay into the blind niche, and then hasten from the recess, and walking round a continuation of the water-course, place himself at a ruined part of the battlement, upon that side of the castle which commanded a view of the approach from the river-side.

At a look he recognised Padhre, coming home, Redmond concluded, from one of his moody rambles. As the single figure moved through the intricacies of the obstructed ground, or appeared and disappeared over the little hillocks before described, sometimes half touched with moonshine, sometimes black in shadow, it gave, in costume and general character, not an unapt notion of the genius of the ruined place. Or, if stripped of superhuman fancies, and contemplated merely as a figure, the effect was scarce less striking; —exactly such a being, so wretched, so sad, so estranged from his fellows, and suggesting so many thoughts of a former and different existence, ought to be the human accompaniment to the scene.

While Redmond contemplated him, Padhre came very near to the castle, and his two old followers appeared limping after him in the distance. They must have seen Redmond on the shattered wall, the moment their eyes could catch it; for he had but just recognised them, when he was startled with their sudden scream, out of which the shrill tones of old Daddy Clayton arose, pronouncing in a key that made the echoes ring —"Who's that! who's that! who's that in our house, lookin' from our wall?"—and the words were no sooner spoken, than Padhre, glancing up, and also seeing

Redmond, added a loud, complaining, and frightened cry, and quickened his pace round the building, towards the entrance, while the hermit birds that, with him, tenanted the ruins, took wing from their ivy-nests, and, fluttering about, discordantly repeated his challenge.

Redmond soon heard Padhre ascending the stairs; his lengthened "Oh-h, oh-h," still kept up, accompanied by the scolding of the old man and the hooting of the owls without. He faced round, to be ready to salute the hermit when he should enter through the square door upon the frail pathway to his cell. In a few seconds, Padhre rushed in.

"God save you, Padhre!" Redmond began; "I have come to see you at last."

The solitary, not giving a glance towards the intruder, and only continuing his mournful and somewhat appalling cry, rapidly walked along the jutting ledge; gained his recess; entered it, with louder lament, as if at finding it open; stuffed the bundle of hay into the low Gothic doorway; and, so shut up, at last was silent.

Redmond, not able to traverse, with Padhre's precipitancy, the frail line of communication between them, slowly picked his steps to the forbidden retreat, and there continued to address the hermit.

"Good Padhre, you do not know me. I am your old friend Redmond, and I come to speak to you on matters of importance: take away the bundle, and let me in."

He paused for some answering motion inside. None reached his ear. He continued.

"Or shall I remove it myself, to save you trouble?"

Still all was silence; and Redmond, owing to the state of his mind, grew impatient, particularly as the voices of the two old followers now sounded at the entrance to the castle, multiplying their indignant questions as to who the intruder might be, and showering curses on his head, "whoever he was."

"I *must* remove it, Padhre, if you do not, for I really want your advice and assistance;"—he pushed

against the bundle; but whether it was now better secured, or that Padhre pushed against him, Redmond could not stir it from its place.

"Come out o' that! come out o' that!" cried the two aged beggars, now arrived at the point that led upon the ledge, and which immediately faced the recess. "Lave our house, whoever you are, an' whatever curse dhruv you into it!" continued Daddy Clayton—"what duv you want there?—what call have you to him?—let him alone, or you'll rue id!—let him be to himself, or you don't know what 'll come acrass you!"

"Begone, you old idiot!" cried Redmond, irritated beyond bounds at the double interruption—"and get down to your own beds, both of you, or——"

"Or what?" interrupted the wrathful speaker,—"what do you threaten on us?—we know you now; but who cares for you, or for your likes?—what could you do to us that's in the hands o' them is your masther?—Lave the place, we bid you, an' don't let *us* threaten *you;*—we daar'n't cross over to you—we're not bid to do id"—(Redmond thought they rather couldn't cross over, or were afraid to venture:)—"but don't stop there to vex us well—don't stop there to make us say words you won't like to hear, an' won't like to feel either."

"Silence!" in his turn interrupted and scolded Redmond—"silence, old impostor, and get down, I say, lest I walk round to you.—Padhre," turning his voice to the recess—"good Padhre, let me in; and, along with giving me comfort in my misfortunes, rid me of these poor old wretches; for I am unhappy, Padhre, very unhappy, and, in recollection of our former friendship, I implore you to listen to me."

This appeal seemed to rouse the hermit: Redmond heard him move about, and then the noise of striking a flint and steel caught his ear. Daddy Clayton became also aware, perhaps, of these symptoms; for they appeared to add great spite and vehemence to his final address.

"Imposther! who's the imposther? them that the word is said to, or him that says the word? What is he, an' who is he? Is he what he puts up for? who knows?—Wretches! who is the wretch, betuxt us? Lave that, as you're tould an' warned, or may you never lave id alive!—lave id, or may the flag you stand on crumble undher your feet—an' now watch well if it isn't shakin'." Redmond, bringing to mind the frailness of his footing, did not feel comfortable. "Lave id, or may He that *can*, shake the ould walls into a hape o' stones above you! The throuble is on you, is id? May it never be off! may it stop on you till the heart grows as withered as the poor, an' the ould, an' the desolate, you spake your bould words to, this night!"

The bundle of hay was here pulled away, and Padhre appeared at the door with a rushlight in his hand, and motioned the aged imprecator and his less boisterous companion to retire. They did so, down to their corners in the lower chamber, still muttering, in the impotent frenzy of age, threats and curses. In obedience to another gesture from Padhre, Redmond stepped into the cell: the hermit again blocked up the opening; then laid his rushlight, which was stuck in a clay ball, on the floor; pointed his visitor to sit on the box; sat himself on his couch; and there, with his eyes as usual cast down, waited to be addressed.

"I remember your early kindness to me, Padhre, and now, when I am in trouble, come to you for comfort," began Redmond, not well knowing how to begin, and, indeed, not well knowing what he exactly wished to say; for, as has been noticed, his impulse to visit the old castle was obeyed without being investigated, and felt but in a very vague manner; while the additional interest created by his discoveries since he entered it, only increased his wish to address Padhre, without supplying any certain points or subject.

"I have told you I am in trouble," he continued, as Padhre remained motionless; "you see me to-night without house or home." The listener started. "Yes, Padhre; I have left my guardian's roof for ever."

Padhre suddenly looked up, and fixed on Redmond the most inquiring gaze. It was the first time the youth had ever fully met his eyes; and now their deep and intellectual, although mournful character, startled him. They were large, black, and finely shaped, and quite free from the vagueness or the peculiarity of expression that bespeaks a disordered mind. After one earnest question with them, Padhre again cast them down.

"I will tell you why, Padhre; he spoke to me of my father:"—Redmond paused, to note the effect of this announcement; the hearer only shook his head:—"he told me what he was, though not who he was." He stopped again; Padhre made no motion. "He told me he was a wretch, Padhre—" the hermit now interrupted the statement of his own accord, starting more vehemently than before, and a second time glancing hastily at Redmond, while his eye kindled strangely.

"Is that true, Padhre? can you tell me, I mean, if it is true? In our former meetings, I sometimes fancied you knew my secret history;—do you know it, Padhre? can you inform me who my parent was? can you inform me whether or no I am degraded in his memory? or does he yet live?"

His poor companion seemed affected, if not agitated, by these questions; yet Redmond could not decide if it was a consciousness, or merely his compassion for the story he heard, that produced the effect. Tears rolled down his cheeks, however; he breathed hard, and perhaps strove to control stronger symptoms of passion.

"You do not answer me, Padhre; yet you seem to give me cause for believing that you are not unacquainted with——"

A sudden raising of both hands, as if to disclaim the inference about to be drawn, interrupted Redmond. The hermit then rose, took from under his couch a rough slate, and with a piece of soft stone wrote upon it, by the feeble help of the rushlight—

"Go back to the house; his daughter loves you: love her in return, and be happy.—Peter has no more to say."

"Never, Padhre," answered Redmond, when he read this; "never shall I cross that man's threshold, until I prove his story true or false; and if I prove it true, never shall his or any other man's roof cover my head. As to your thought about the young lady, it is imaginary;"—Padhre made an insisting gesture—"or, even were it not, I have before told you my whole heart is given to another woman: but all that has now little to do with the present subject." Again Padhre interrupted him with impatient gesticulation, and would fain enforce that Redmond was to return to his guardian's, and forget all his troubles by uniting himself to Ellen.

"Tush, Padhre; you do not attend to me, nor care for my real interests. Is Pratt's hellish word true?" he continued, growing vehement; "answer me that, man, if you can and will; if you cannot, good night, or good morning, for I believe it is now near the day-break, and let me go seek an answer over the wide face of the earth."

Padhre heard him, standing motionless, and apparently wrapped in the almost abject humility with which he was wont to take every thing like ill-treatment, by whomsoever directed to him. Redmond was touched at the expression of the poor solitary; and from the want of interest, too, displayed towards the chief topic which concerned him, inclined to believe that all his notions of Padhre having really known anything about him, must now prove ill-founded and romantic. This caused him to resume in a milder tone.

"Well, old friend, you cannot help me, I see; so farewell!" He held out his hand. Padhre drew back; not coldly nor in dislike, but as if in avoidance of a greeting he was not permitted to give or take. "A wordy farewell, then, if you will have it so; and a farewell for ever, Padhre: I know I will have your prayers:"—the old man knelt down—"yes, I know that; for I remember your kindness to me when I was a child, though *you* will not remember it with sufficient interest to explain it;—an eternal farewell,

Padhre, to you and your old castle, and this country that I used to think my native country—"

At the repetition of the words "eternal farewell," the solitary started from his knees, and, with shakings of the head and rejecting motions of his hands, seemed to refuse to part on such terms.

"It must be so," continued Redmond; "I cannot live here after my good name, old friend." —— Padhre grew more earnest in his expostulations. "No, no; this night, though I know not where to get the means, I start for Dublin; and from that place Heaven knows whither."

The hermit made a sign that he should stop; paused a moment in deep thought; again wrote on his slate, and handed it to Redmond, who read—"If you are so obstinate, come to me again, though you will not go home: come in eleven days; I will think of all that troubles you, and ask and pray that you may get a relief. Think you of her that loves you; and whose heart pines for your love. Now God above be your guard."

Redmond had scarce perused these lines, when the rushlight ceased to burn, and Padhre retired to his couch. Inconsistently indulging, for a moment, a recurrence of his previous thought that, in some way or other, the hermit and he were bound together in one fate, Redmond at last replied to the written command, "Well, Padhre, wherever I may now go, or whatever happens to me in the mean time, I will come and see you again in eleven days. And now, as you have said to me I say to you—God bless you."

He left the recess, and cautiously stepping over nearly two sides of the jutting water-course, gained the staircase, and began to descend. He had not reached the bottom of the second flight, when he thought he heard a stealthy footstep above him; and ere he gained the landing-place before the chamber occupied by Padhre's old warders, a heavy purse, as was at once indicated by the sound it gave, dropped on the stone he must step over. Redmond stooped; picked it up; and not doubting that his strange friend, following

him from the recess, had cast it down for him, unhesitatingly appropriated it.

As he passed the door of the old men's chamber, Daddy Clayton, roused by the heavy jingle of the purse just at his threshold, screamed out, "There, he's quittin' our house at last, afther robbin' us, an rune-in' us! Our hearty curse go along wid him! May every skhillin' he takes away"—(really suspecting how the purse was had, perhaps, but jealous of its appropriation,) "every skhillin' an' every goolden guinea turn into a red cendher o' hell's fire in his pocket!"—and Redmond, hurrying down, lost half of the good wishes of this kind that were sent after him.

He gained the river-side without a plan, and still at the mercy of every impulse. A new one started in his mind, and he at once obeyed it. He would hasten to Dublin, unbosom himself to an old and confidential friend, and solicit counsel and comfort. A town from which a mode of conveyance could be had was only a few miles distant. He walked on for it; gained Dublin in about ten hours after; found that his friend had gone to London; remained in his hotel, moody and solitary, during two days; then came out and called on some other friends, but such as he would not think of committing himself to; experienced from them a coldness and repulsion he could not explain, but from which he quickly shrunk back; (it was, in fact, the result of certain letters Mr. Pratt had written to town, in anticipation of Redmond's arrival;) thought of embarking for England, or America, or any where; recollected in horror and anguish his appointment with Cushneiche, and with irritating interest his other appointment for a subsequent day with Padhre; returned to the country by stealth; walked, from a rather distant point, to Tobin's house, on the evening of the wedding; lurked about it until he had a second interview with the robber, that almost fixed him in despairing certainty; and afterwards waited outside until Mr. Pratt had been spirited away, and until his own rencounter with Miss D'Arnell.

CHAPTER VIII.

When Mr. Pratt unsuspectingly followed Cushneiche out of the barn into the house, he found a second man, wrapt in a loose outside coat, waiting for them in the parlour where the guests had been dancing before dinner. The hard and bad expression of this person's face struck him the moment they met, and perhaps he felt a slight misgiving. But he was not allowed time for doubt or second thoughts. Cushneiche cautiously shut the door, as soon as they had stepped over its threshold, and standing with his back to it, began his real business.

"We're sorry for the trouble you'll have, Sir; but afore you look at the deed for us, we'll want you home until mornin'—not a word, now, i' you please;"—as the gentleman started back, and was about to speak;—"it might disturb the honest people o' the house, an' we're not for disturbing any body, when we can help it—so, you may's well—Yallow Sam!" addressing his companion, in this interruption, "look sharp, lad."—Sam instantly drew out a pistol, as Cushneiche showed another. "You may's well, I say, walk down the bosheen wid us, quiet an' asy, an' have no fear of hurt or harum from us, in regard you're in the hands o' two gintlemin, every inch o' them; only if one word comes out o' your mouth, somethin' else 'ill be likely to come out o' this—or that,"—touching his own pistol, and pointing to Sam's—"that maybe you wouldn't care to swally afther your wine, as well as a bit o' Kitty Tobin's bride-cake."

"An' if it's a hail or a talk you want, master," observed Sam, "you'll have enough o' that when we stow you on board."

"On board!" faltered Mr. Pratt, notwithstanding the threats held out, speaking, however, in a very low tone. Sam instantly put his pistol to his head.

"Stop, Sam; forgive an' forget, this time: though, Sir," addressing himself to Pratt, "it's a brache of

ordhers we can't overlook again; an' as to Sam's word, don't mind it; he was at sey onct in his life, with myself too, an' he can't forget the sey talk, when it's no use to remember it;—but this is all a waste o' the precious time: come, Sir; no hurt is intended to you, I say again, on the word of a gintleman, if you walk fair an' asy between us."

He opened the parlour-door, peeped out cautiously into the kitchen, listened, and then, with a sign to his comrade, stole on tiptoe towards the entrance to the yard, from which the crowd of beggars had retired, leaving a dead silence behind them.

"Come, brother, a grapple," said Sam, offering his arm. Mr. Pratt shrunk back. "Ha—" cocking his pistol—"no mutiny, I tell you—but, first, what cargo, eh?"—rifling the gentleman's fob and pockets of his watch, a few guineas, and a purse of silver—"light enough' but can't help that,"—putting up his prize—"an' now we're afore the wind, square an' tight."

Twining his great arm round Mr. Pratt's, of which the hard uneven pressure felt like a coil of twisted cables, he conveyed him to the yard: Cushneiche met them, also linked the gentleman, and the party proceeded to the road. At about the point where Redmond afterwards withdrew from Miss D'Arnell, they crossed the loose fence, and struck for the river side, avoiding the old castles, and approaching the water higher up towards their source. Ere they had half made way, however, down the intervening grounds, Cushneiche stopped, and pulling a large silk handkerchief from his pocket, deliberately folded it into the shape in which neckcloths are usually worn, as he said, "An' now we have to ax pardon a second time, but your honour 'ill have to put on this, afore we stir a step farther."

Mr. Pratt felt a hideous misgiving as to the way it was intended to be put on; and when the robber motioned to arrange it, fell on his knees, and in a cautious yet distracted tone, asked for mercy. Sam laughed savagely, and added, "Deep sey take the lubber, it's thinkin' o' the yard arm he is;" while Cushneiche re-

ieved the suppliant's fears, by wrapping the handkerchief over his eyes, and tying it hard at the back of his head. They then resumed their journey; the two men again linking Mr. Pratt, and supporting him as he faltered during the continued descent.

He endeavoured to note in his mind the direction they were taking; but he thought that the robbers sought to baffle him in the attempt, by doubling, more than once, to the right and to the left; and when more than sufficient time for gaining the river had elapsed, and that still it was not gained, although its gentle ripple came uninterruptedly on his ear, he felt more assured of their tactics. He was, however, compelled at the same time to acknowledge to himself, that the manœuvring, although strongly suspected by him, put him so far out of his calculations, as at last to leave a doubt whether they were conveying him up or down the stream.

They walked him through a wood, evidently spreading over ground that still shelved; but he was not able to decide on its situation, inasmuch as he knew two of the same kind lying some distance asunder, and could not assure himself which of the two this was. Emerging from it, they dragged him again over open ground; and finally stopped at the river's edge, where the rushing and broken noise of the water informed Mr. Pratt's ear that there was a fordable shallow. Once more he tried to calculate his position; but, as in the former case, brought to mind two or three points, up and down the river, similar to this, and was unsuccessful.

Cushneiche whistled, and the footsteps of two additional friends were heard. The men came up, lifted him on their shoulders, and stepped into the water. His original captors followed.

When they gained the opposite bank, Cushneiche asked of the new comers, "How soon can we cross the other sthrame, boys?"—"In no time," they answered, meaning "very soon." "Stir the shanks, then!" and he and Sam grappled Mr. Pratt, and walked him on.

The prisoner strove to remember of what stream

they had spoken. He knew only one, which, running parallel to the river they had forded, lay some miles into the hills. While he was employing his thoughts on the subject, his guides helped him over a fence; soon after, over another; then up an eminence; then along level ground; then up and down again; until, as before, he could not tell in what direction from the river they were travelling. But, in about half an hour, the angry rippling of water a second time sounded near; and a second time he was raised on the shoulders of two men, and carried across another ford. For some hundred yards he could now be sure that he was urged on in a straight line; and at last his conductors stopped. He heard the noise of tumbling stones, as if clearing away from some spot before him, and he was ushered into a retreat, where, as he cautiously stepped along, for about ten yards, his footsteps, and those of the persons who accompanied him, were prolonged with a hollow reverberation. He judged that he passed through a vault of some kind; but in what part of his neighbourhood such a thing, so circumstanced, was situated, Mr. Pratt could not conjecture. While he walked on, he felt straw or rushes under his feet; and a red light soon became sensible to his vision, even through the bandage Cushneiche had supplied.

Mr. Pratt was led by the arm to a large stone, and desired to sit on it.

"We ax pardon over agin, Sir," said the robber; "but the gossip you're to meet isn't come as yet, an' till he's to the fore 'twould be a woful waste o' words to be spakin' to any other body round you; so you 'll jist keep the mouth shet, like a quiet dacent gintleman; for Sam there—(he's handy by you)—has a knack for stoppin' a pratin' tongue. Sam, sit by his honour, an' mind ordhers."

Mr. Pratt heard the willing subaltern obey the command, and then the foot of, as he judged, Cushneiche, sound along the retreat, and die away abroad in the distance.

It was Cushneiche, who tracing back much of the way they had come, at last gained a commanding point

of ground, sat down and looked around him. The person he expected and awaited soon ran up, panting and impassioned, after his farewell with Miss D'Arnell.

"What brings you here?" he began, evidently not expecting to meet Cushneiche; "he has escaped all your plans, I suppose? and do you think to baffle me again, and at last?".

"He hasn't escaped, Redmond; he's snug undher the arch, where I tould you you'd find him; but I come to sit here for two rasons. First, that you mightn't think he and I had any collodgin' together, while you stopped away; an' next, to have a little more discourse wid you, betwixt ourselfs, afore you go to hear what he has to tell you."

"We have had discourse enough, together, outside the barn, just now; but go on."

"Yes; I gave you the account there, of how I cum to pitch upon Pratt for the buyin' o' the grounds an' the house for me an' you; or for yourself alone, Redmond a-chorra—that's it;—an' the account of how I met him, an' put you into his hands, an' was forced to lave the parchments wid him, till I could call back soon, an' get them up, and so make everything right, as I thought; an' all that story you're now to hear agin, out of his mouth; but where I got the threasure to pay him, an' why I didn't come back, as I laid out to do, for twenty long years afther, you haven't heard from me yet, ma bouchal."

"Nor is it necessary I should. I can guess the account you would supply. You got the money in a manner that it is disgrace and death for me to think of, and you did not come back because—" he stopped and hid his face with his hands. Cushneiche resumed.

"Ay, Redmond; you needn't be tould it; I only went back to England to lay my hand on the last lob I hid afore I brought you to Pratt, my mind full of givin' up the ould thrade, an' of settlin' in my own counthry, wid a new name, an' rearin' you to be a gintleman an' a good Christhen, an' you an' no one else knowin' how it come about, when one o' my nearest

cronies sould the pass on me, the very day I touched English ground, an' the big wigs thought it was a great favour they done me to send me across the wide seys, for life, instead of—no matther what;—that's how it all happened, Redmond. I couldn't make myself known to Pratt, afther this short turn; I was forced to lave you an' the parchments in his hands, an' go on my long voyage, only hopin' the day 'ud come when I might give them the slip across the wather, an' speed to poor Ireland to see you rightified; but there was a hard eye as well as a hard hand kept over me: an' it's not many months sence I was able to take my lave o' them at last, an' thravel here to look for you."

"And here you arrived, unhappy man, with your old vices only confirmed by a reckoning of twenty long years, and ready to break out again into the recent acts that, above all former ones, disgrace your white hairs, and—if your story is true—brand your most miserable offspring."

"I was poor an' friendless, an' bare an' naked, Redmond, and what could I do? I knew no thrade but the ould one; nothin' else came handy to me; an' then I had to wait to see you in the counthry, an' gain a knowledge o' you, by lookin' at you, that we might spake together, an' that no one but you might know your bad father was to the fore—an' how was I to live while I waited? More-betoken, a-bouchal—"

"No matter," interrupted Redmond; "let us end this, and go at once to Pratt. Is he kept blindfolded as you promised?"

"As blind as the bat, Redmond; you can stand by him cheek by jowl, an' he'll never see you, if you hould your tongue;" though it was not Redmond alone that Cushneiche wished to keep from Pratt's view.

"Come, then;" Redmond walked forward.

"Come, a-vich;" following him; "an' you won't wondher, to hear me change the voice, an' the way o' spakin' when we're talkin' to him, becase, you see, the time I put you into his hands, I done the same thing;

ow dust in his eyes, purtendin' to chaffer like a gintleman, or the like, that the tongue might be ch to the story I tould, an' the cloathes I wore."
shall wonder at nothing, if you make that story to him and to me—quick, we lose time;" and ıond and Cushneiche rapidly walked back to the where Mr. Pratt was left in custody with "Yallow
"

at gentleman soon heard two persons approaching. retched his ear to ascertain if one of them stepped Cushneiche, to whose tread, when a short time be- ıe left the robber's den, Mr. Pratt had paid par- r attention; and he expected to recognize in the of the new-comer, the approach of his ward Red- . But he had to argue cases with one as much as he was to such nice calculations.

Iarkee, a-vich," whispered Cushneiche to his anion ere they came close; "the ould attorney ıow who you are, though he can't see a stim, if on't walk short an' sharp, instid o' taking them lague sthrides: by the hand o' my body, he can you if you stand betwixt his nose an' the wind; ıt walk in like some other body besides yourself; ıme that I will sthrive to do, plase God."

d, true to his plan, Cushneiche assumed a heavy, ng gait, as he led the way to Pratt; while Red- , following, broke up his usual pace into the kind ncing one that his conductor recommended.

'hat's neither one nor the other of them," thought 'ratt, as they entered; "but I must be obser-
'

shneiche pointed Redmond to stand in a situation ıost remote from which he could perfectly hear ɔming conversation. Then he at once began to ion his prisoner, changing his voice, as he had ised to Redmond he would do, into a deep, sono- adence, and affecting to speak in the description oken English it might be supposed a Spaniard or nish colonist would use; but as this embarrassed, lid not in a degree burlesque the rather import- ature of the questions he asked, and the answers

he received, it will be as well to translate his gibberish into plainer language.

"Joshua Pratt, do you know why you are brought here, to-night?"

The prisoner started at the first sound of the voice and language, but after a pause, said, "No."

"Have a care; recollect yourself. Can you guess who asks you the question?"

Pratt again paused a considerable time, and at last answered—"Perhaps I do."

"Then you know why you are here. What has become of your ward, Redmond Redmond?"

"He left my house against my will or wish, and is now, I believe and hope, in Dublin."

"*Your* house? Go on."

"I will."

"You know there is more than one pistol at your head; and you ought to know that if you do not give true answers to all I shall demand of you, the bullets they hold may soon fly through your brain."

"Well; I shall speak under such an impression."

"You know, too, or you fear at least, that the man who discourses with you is the man to give the sign when the triggers are to be pulled, because he has a right to judge the truth or the falsehood of what you say."

"Be it so; I will speak the truth and nothing but the truth."

"Hearken another word. You have done great wrong, and you know that too; wrong and dishonesty to an innocent child, and to a stranger who trusted every thing dear to him into your hands. But it is not now intended to punish you; a true account of your own villany, and justice, at last, to the victims of it, is all that is asked. You shall not even be called to a public account in any shape; perhaps you will even be allowed to keep some of your plunder."

"That is generous; I acknowledge having done wrong, and am now more than ever inclined to make restitution."

God send it. But now mind yourself. Who is
ather of Redmond Redmond?"
do not know; that is, I do not clearly and fully
."
Have you ever seen his father?"
I have seen the person from whom I received the
and who called himself his father."
By what name?"
Redmond Velasquez."
shneiche held up his finger to Redmond, who
d his head in agitated assent.
What did he represent himself to be?"
A Spanish gentleman, partly of Irish extraction,
had amassed great wealth in Spanish America, and
was anxious to spend the remainder of his life in
nd."
gnals again passed between Cushneiche and Red-
l.
What did you believe him to be?"
I believed his story at the time."
Have you altered your opinion of it since? what
ou now believe he was? what have you reported
as, within the last few days?"
att slightly started, and for a moment was silent,
trying to accommodate his mind in the best way
new circumstance of his situation heretofore unex-
d, or at least now made certain.
Why do you stop?—Cock your pistol, Yellow
"
att again winced under the click, close to his ear,
h instantly followed this command. He quickly
vered himself, however.
There is no need of your threat, or of this shock-
preparation, if, indeed, you mean to keep your
l with me, and save my life in reward for the
t truth of my answers. I will reply to your last
tion freely. I have altered my opinion of the
told to me by the person who called himself
mond Velasquez; that alteration of opinion was
essed in the rumours to which you allude; and
e rumours went to say that my ward Redmond

was, most probably, the son of an individual who had accumulated his wealth by repeated breaches of the laws that, in every country, protect property."

"You mean that he robbed and plundered for it?"

"Some such thing."

"Have you ever added, in the rumour, that, since his transactions with you, Redmond Velasquez had, in all likelihood, suffered a shameful death?"

"Yes; but I had little further authority for that addition than the natural conclusion that, unless prevented by such a fate, he would have returned to claim his child and his property."

"What led you to think that he was the character you now suppose he was?"

"The answer had best be given in a shape that, although lengthened, will contain a history of all my knowledge on the subject, and all my connexion with it."

"Answer as you like, but go on."

"But a short space of time is wanted to make it twenty years since my meeting with the man who called himself Redmond Velasquez. Previous to our meeting, I was, as hundreds remember, a poor and unemployed barrister, mostly residing in the village yonder. A letter came to me, from London, bearing his signature, which instructed me to treat, in his name, for the purchase of a large estate, then to be sold, in the neighbourhood. He had recently been travelling in Ireland, he said, and, from a passing view, liked the property; and the letter added accounts of his rank and character, and of his wish to spend the remainder of his days in a country, to the people of which he considered himself partially allied. It then proceeded to instruct me to close the transaction with the venders as quickly and as secretly as possible; to get title-deeds prepared in his name, and that of his son, which was the same with his; and to expect him over in Ireland, in a short time, to receive the deeds from me; and as my security, in obeying his wishes, the letter enclosed the halves of two bills on a Dublin house, of sufficient amount to make the purchase, considerable as it was, and leave an overplus.

"My first step was to hasten to Dublin, call at the house on which the bills were drawn, and submit the signature of the drawer; for the halves remitted to me were those which bore that signature. I was answered that the principals were ready to honour the draughts, and, moreover, had received advice of the drawing of the bills from their highly-respectable mercantile correspondent in London. After this, I did not hesitate to write from Dublin to Redmond Velasquez, acknowledging the enclosure, and professing myself ready to proceed in the purchase of the estate, so soon as he should remit the second halves of the bills. They duly arrived. I closed the business in his name, and prepared and had the title-deeds legally executed.

"But I did not as quickly register them. Even so soon, I began to have vague notions of a certain mystery about my unknown correspondent, of which, I argued, I might possibly take advantage. While in Dublin, I recollected some friends that had spent the greater parts of their lives in Spanish America, and were acquainted with the names, at least, of almost every person in the country, who, in their time, had acquired wealth to the great seeming extent of the individual in question; and, without at all betraying the confidence reposed in me—indeed I guarded it for my own sake—I cautiously asked if they recollected the name of Redmond Velasquez. They had never heard it. I went on to ask if it was probable a person of that name could, for a series of years before, have been acquiring vast riches in Spanish America, without their knowledge. They thought such a case quite impossible; as they had, themselves, been engaged in all the pursuits by which wealth was made in the colony, and were certain that, from their long residence, extensive mercantile and trading connections, and minute information, they must have heard, year after year, the title and description of every such rising adventurer. But they referred me to other sources of information, of which I availed myself; and every inquiry only added strength to my doubt, and I returned to my village, resolved to act very cautiously.

"In fact, I began to recollect that there were ways of amassing wealth on the high seas of the Spanish Main, other than those warranted by industry and fair dealing. Or it was possible, I thought, for one of the freebooters who, then, more than now, infested the high-roads in England, to accumulate great riches without crossing the Atlantic; and if the money with which I had purchased the estate was obtained in any such manner, and could be proved to have been so obtained, I was not able to resist the vast hope of keeping in my own hands the produce of booty over which a pirate or a robber could have no legal control. So I avoided registering the deeds in the name of Redmond Velasquez; of course they were not registered at all; and I sat down to reduce my great and agitating speculations to some order, and to calculate, in case of the contingency I reckoned as probable, how I should act. I was poor, and the sudden prospect of wealth filled and disturbed my whole soul.

"I wrote to an old schoolfellow in London to make close inquiries as to who and what my correspondent really was. I gave the address, as supplied to me, and also the address of the mercantile persons who had drawn the bills, hinting an obscure suspicion, which, as my friend was also in the law, would however set him earnestly at work. To this letter I got no answer for a long time; my friend was out of London. But another circumstance gave almost the assurance which an answer from him, containing certain information, might have supplied. Redmond Velasquez did not come, as quickly as he had given me to expect, to claim his purchase;—weeks, months, wore away, and I did not hear from him, or of him, in any shape. My over-anxious calculations began to flatter me with the supposition, that already some event, some discovery or unexpected chance, to which all persons of the character I had supplied to him are liable, must have occurred to keep him back, and perhaps cut him off for ever, by death or necessitous self-banishment, from the enjoyment of his estate. My toiling and needy hands began to tremble with the pleasurable anticipa-

tions of a great change of life and circumstances, and ambition and avarice whispered delicious prospects, when I was suddenly brought to my senses, and plunged back into all my consciousness of laborious poverty.

"He came at last.

"My humble village-house directly faced the little inn, and as I stood at my office window, one dark and drizzling evening in November 17—, a private travelling carriage, of a sombre colour, rattled down the empty street, and stopped at the inn-door. An arrival so unusual, in a place so retired and inland, did not fail to arouse general curiosity; every one ran to look out at their doors or windows; but no one felt the novelty as I did. I had been indulging one of my brightest visions, and it vanished like a dream the moment the equipage appeared; my heart sunk in a sickening omen. Some one got out of the carriage, entered the inn, and I stood sure of a summons. I was not disappointed. In a few moments, the landlord hurried across the street, knocked loudly at my door, and informed me, in breathless bustle and amaze, that a foreign gentleman, a prince, he believed, desired to see me. I said I would attend him. The landlord went back; I sat an instant, to summon up my self-possession, and to arrange all the points I could think of, and then followed him.

"I was ushered into the principal room in the little inn. A stranger, certainly wearing a foreign dress, and having a foreign air, paced quickly up and down the apartment. It was, as I have said, deep twilight, and I could not see his features distinctly; they were further hidden by his broad-leafed hat; but he wore mustachoes, and had an air of mixed fierceness and nobility. The landlord, who had opened the door to me, asked, before he withdrew, if he should bring a light. The stranger answered no, in an abrupt tone, and commanded him to begone. I remained standing at the door, and bowed, repeatedly. For some time he took no notice of me, although, in continuing to pace up and down, we often confronted each other. Perhaps, too, the state of my feelings and thoughts to-

wards him, and the sudden arrival and view of a person so high and grand in his appearance and manner, at the very moment I had been investing him with a disgraceful character, gave a humiliated and mean expression to my face, person, and bearing, which deprived me, in his mind, of any right to the usual forms of respect.

"At last, suddenly stopping before me, he said, speaking in the foreign phrase and language you speak in,—and, as well as I can remember, the tone of the voice was the same, 'Your name is Pratt, and we have corresponded together.'

"I assented. He proceeded to demand if the estate had been purchased. I answered that it had. Then he called on me for the title deeds. I readily replied, according to previous arrangement, that I had sent them to Dublin to be registered. He seemed not to understand this, but expressed and showed great impatience and anger at not immediately getting them. I explained the necessity of the proceeding, and, after a pause, he desired me to go out of the room, write an acknowledgment that I had purchased the estate, and executed the titles, in his name, and on his account; that the latter were not immediately forthcoming, in consequence of the reason I gave; but that, on his speedy return, I should have them ready. I withdrew accordingly, and, at the same time, he walked into an inner room, and I heard him asking for lights. When I returned with the form of acknowledgment, I found him again in the outer apartment. He snatched the paper from me, and a second time passed into the now lighted room. In a few seconds he called to the landlord, who immediately attended him, and, as I afterwards learned, whom he caused to sign the paper, as a witness, having first ascertained that the man had just seen me writing and subscribing it.

"Again he joined me, and said, 'You will be the better of your connexion with this affair, if you are willing still to do all I require of you. I cannot now stop to take possession of my estate, being called away by pressing business to France, and it is with difficulty I have been able to spare time for my present journey;

but I wish to leave my son in your care until I return; and I empower you to take possession of the house on my estate, in his name and mine, to live there with him until I return, and to act as my agent, upon an annuity of five hundred pounds. Do you consent?'

"After a moment's pause, I gave an affirmative.

"'But what I wish you to do is to be done promptly,' he continued; 'you must take charge of my son this very night, if at all; and he is not quite at hand; his nurse and he got ill after the little sea voyage, and, as time pressed, I left them on the coast. Can you come with me this moment to meet them? Your refusal or denial makes us friends, or ends our acquaintance.'

"Thus pressed, and by no means wishing to lose sight of the man, or, supposing me to fail in higher aims, of the annuity he proposed, I at once consented. He then only delayed in the inn to recompense the landlord for the trouble he had given, when, desiring me to follow him to his carriage, we got into it, and were rapidly driven out of the village.

"It was about nine o'clock. The night fell fast and black, and, though sitting opposite to him, I lost all view of my companion. Scarce a word was exchanged between us. He never began to converse; and when I ventured a remark, or asked a question, he only yielded an abrupt monosyllable, which sounded as if I had roused him from slumber. At midnight, we gained the little sea-coast hamlet of ——. The carriage stopped at a mean public-house. He got out, desiring me to await his coming back. Ere he passed from my view, some seafaring men met him near the carriage, and, pointing towards the shore, spoke to him in a whisper. He looked, nodded, as if in assent, and left them. I also looked, and indistinctly saw the sails of a vessel, as if unfurled for a voyage. He soon returned, accompanied by two women, one of a foreign aspect and dress, the other a woman of the place. The former carried a child beneath her cloak, and handed it to the latter, who had just been engaged to take care of the infant as far as I was to accompany it.

"'There is your charge,' he said, handing the poor woman and her burden into the carriage to me. 'When you arrive at home, engage a regular nurse for the child. Take the carriage with you, as, until I return, I shall not want it; and take this too,' giving me a heavy purse, 'lest you have not sufficient money left for your new purposes; we shall strike an account soon. Now, good night;' and, passing the arm of the foreign-looking female through his, both walked towards the vessel, whose canvass was spread to the wind. The child thus given up to me was my ward, Redmond Redmond. When his father had remained years away, that was the name I confirmed to him.

"The carriage drove back, without a moment's delay, towards my native village. I was in hopes of being able to gain, by questioning the driver, whom, at the inn, I observed was the stranger's own servant, some information or clue to all this mystery; but when, before daybreak, we arrived at our destination, I saw I had been accompanied home by another man, an inhabitant, like the temporary nurse, of the small sea-coast hamlet. From them nothing important could be expected; and I forbore questioning them, lest, in furtherance of a plan that during the journey I had conceived, it might be supposed I was at a loss to account for any thing to which they knew I was a witness.

"That same morning I took possession of the very noble mansion attached to the estate. The woman who had brought Redmond home, I sent back to her hamlet, without a remark, and put the child to nurse at the farm-house, where I have spent this present evening. Then, prepared to account for the step to the stranger on the ground of making fit arrangements for his return, in case he should return, I boldly set to work to form a household establishment commensurate with the considerable rental of which he or I was to be the proprietor: all the while avoiding to satisfy any of the numerous inquiries that I knew would arise as to my changed situation. My first correspondence with Redmond Velasquez I had kept, as I have said, a profound secret; no one had heard of such a name except

ons from whom I made the purchase, and they
nglish assignees, who long before left the coun-
could not, therefore, be suspected that I was
the agent of another proprietor of the property;
nished neighbours would, I argued, at once in-
with that proprietorship; and I left them to
e, at their leisure, the mystery of how I arrived
amazing good fortune. First, I secluded my-
m all visitors, and so got rid of the trouble of
ague or equivocating answers. Then I secretly
country, and spent much time in Dublin; and
returned home, chance threw in my way a
io, by proper management, I found would be
the person to give, without involving me, the
impression I wished to have confirmed. This
as William Cotteril. He had been employed
land steward to assist in the collection of small
nd had therefore some access to me. I ob-
that, under affectation of great simplicity, he hid
g sense of his own interests, a subserviency
ind of devotion to any one that could promote
and, above all, a smooth and irresistible knack
ng the secrets of others, or of insinuating what-
atement he wished to be believed. After at-
him to me by the means I knew would succeed,
detected him, during our half-confidential hours
ness, trying to win from me some notions of
iad so suddenly arisen from penury into afflu-
Not seeming to notice his view, or, at least, to
t with displeasure, I took him in the way that
ny purpose. First, I gave him vaguely to un-
d that a brother of mine, whom all the village
vare had in his boyhood gone to sea, died abroad
flourishing circumstances. Next, that he left
iext, that when I went to Dublin, upon receipt
London letter, it might have been for the pur-
ioney of the estate;—and then, the stranger
hom it was known I left the inn, might be the
agent who had charge of my nephew, and also
r effects of my deceased brother. But through
story I never made an assertion. And, in con-

clusion, I hinted that for certain grievous domestic reasons, not to be explained, I was not left at liberty to bring up my ward in the knowledge of his father's name or character, or of the manner of his death. At the same time, I knew Cotteril would repeat every word I had said, with his own modifications and additions; indeed, I made him feel, unknown to himself, that such might be my wish; and he was precisely the man, in fact, to make himself useful.

"It was soon known that I wished no questions to be asked on the subject: and although, in consequence of this belief, a taint might be supposed to attach to the memory of my brother, and to the way in which his wealth had accrued, yet the usual influence of riches did not fail in my regard, and I took my rank as a gentleman of great property, and my estated neighbours overlooked the doubt.

"All this while it is needless to observe that Redmond Velasquez did not return. But, if he had, I could fear nothing from the story that prevailed. I could prove that I had never authorized it; I could challenge any man to say I had; and even if he suspected my tampering with Cotteril, I could make him assured that my obscure equivocation was only meant to ward off from him the idle curiosity and inquiries which he had not yet given me formal instructions to gratify.

"Years rolled on without his appearance or any communication from him. My original conjectures as to his character, and hopes of investing myself with the estate, grew every day stronger. And a letter at last came from my London legal friend which made me almost certain. He had inquired at the address first supplied by Redmond Velasquez, and the proprietors of the house threw much question on that individual. No one in London knew him or his followers; the house which had drawn the bills forwarded to me, received value in raw bullion, at his own hands; he had left his lodgings with a promise to return, which he had never fulfilled; much valuable property remained unclaimed behind him; and, most important of all, a few weeks

after his departure, officers of justice had been inquiring about him, or some of his companions.

"From the first, my mind was embarrassed with respect to the child he had left in my charge. Justice, and justice even to my own feelings and conscience, required that I should bring up the boy well, and destine him to enjoy a part, at least, of the wealth acquired by his reputed father. But I could never acquaint him with his real claim, because I should then run the risk of being by him deprived of the portion I reserved for myself. While deeply considering the question, about three years after he was placed in my hands I married; became the father of a daughter; and now I thought I saw a pleasing future prospect of doing him full justice, and, at the same time, of protecting my own interests. I supposed it natural that he and my child, brought up together, in the same house, would form a youthful attachment which might end in their union; and thus he would eventually possess the whole estate, and, until my death, I should enjoy it with him.

"As the children grew up, my views seemed to prosper. When old enough to understand the nature of a mutual passion, I saw that they loved each other. Redmond, at nineteen years, paid to his young companion every attention likely to subdue her heart, and it was evident that he succeeded to a degree which made all her hopes of happiness in this life dependent upon him. And now I draw to a close. He has left my house without an adequate reason, just at the moment I contemplated his happiness. Occasionally, indeed, I thought it my duty to urge him to studies necessary for the proper formation of his mind, and for the due support of the rank and place he would be called to fill; but surely that was not an adequate reason; and, upon the night he disappeared, he provoked me, by, he will admit, wherever he is, very cruel treatment, to make an allusion to the fact of his mysterious parentage which while I am very sorry for it, could not warrant his elopement, either. If the person who addresses me has any real interest in the lad, and if he knows what has become of him, let Redmond be advised to return to my

house—to his own house—and that will be a better course. I may, indeed, be dispossessed of the estate; but that cannot happen in a very short time; and before it happens, the statute of limitations may come into effect, in my favour, and the law of the land continue me in the property I have so long held without a question.

"Or, if, as from the first I suspected, a stain rests on his parentage, which it will not be for his honour or happiness to have known, there is no conduct so prudent for him to pursue, as that which I advise. It is evident that the persons now around me have a sincere interest in his welfare, and therefore they will keep the secret which they seem previously to have known, or of which my statement puts them in possession; I will keep it, as evidently, for my own sake; and so, Redmond has only to form an alliance to which he has made honourable advances, and which, every thing else apart, involves the happiness, perhaps the life, of an ingenuous girl, and the feelings of an affectionate father, and then keep his own secret, too, and all will be well.

"I speak as much for him as for myself, or for the young lady whose cause he has compelled me, however reluctantly or painfully, to advocate. And if friends or relations are at last arrived to urge his claim, perhaps I speak with a view to their credit and advantage also. Certainly, no good can arise to any one from unnecessary exposure; and I only wish Redmond himself were here, to witness, from my own lips, the sentiments of sincere affection and anxiety I have always entertained towards him. I have done. What I have said is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as God can witness."

CHAPTER IX.

THERE was a profound silence after Mr. Pratt had done speaking. But the groans, the sobs, and the hard breathings of Redmond might be heard in the pause; and as well, indeed, might they have been heard during the recital, which, at different stages affected him, now with wonder, now with anguish and despair. Nor is it to be supposed that, from such symptoms, a mind so acute as Mr. Pratt's, remained long in doubt of the presence of his ward. In fact, he recognized his very breathing, the first moment it became audible from emotion, and all along had told his story and made his remarks under the certainty that Redmond was listening.

Perhaps the reader has already suspected as much, from the seemingly generous kind of self-accusation, and the superflous humility, rather out of keeping with Mr. Pratt's character, which occasionally insinuated itself into his manner of telling his story; and his concluding sentiments and exhortation may have more particularly suggested the idea.

During the statement, Cushneiche had never once forgotten to appeal by signs for Redmond's acknowledgment of a previous acquaintance with the facts, as they occurred. Now, he was the first to move, after Mr. Pratt remained some time silent. Preserving his heavy stride, he walked to the mouth of the retreat, beckoning Redmond to attend him. The unhappy youth, showing by his features and gesticulation the most lively agony of mind, followed. They walked aside some distance from the den.

"Well, ma-bouchal, did I tell you any thing that wasn't the thruth?"

"No, no; your story and your claim are but too true and certain."

"And what man but the man Pratt calls Redmond Velasquez, could give you the knowledge aforehand, of all that passed between the both, from first to last?"

"I admit it—I admit it fully. Go on."

"And now, is there any notion come into your poor head of what you're goin' to do?"

"Die, die!" answered Redmond, groaning miserably; "I have nothing to do but die."

"Huth; you're as good as two dead men yet. Will you be said by me?"

"Say any thing you like."

"Take Pratt's advice then."

"How?"

"Make up to the poor colleen you coaxed so long."

"That's a mistake; a mistake very dishonouring to me. I never paid the explicit attentions he speaks of; I never wished to pay them, and it is impossible the young lady can have misunderstood me to the extent he says she has."

"Whisht, Redmond; they're soft, wake poor cratures, you know, an' a little o' the smooth tongue, from a likely gorçoon, goes far with them; the colleen thinks you meant to be sweet on her, an' so, you bothered her, that's all, whichever way you wanted it to be;—sure there's many a way of killin' a dog besides hangin' him. Look at the matther agin. The ould attorney spakes rason. It's the best coorse."

"Best or worst, it can never be mine. I do not and never will, never can regard the young lady in such a light."

"Not if her heart is broke with your puttin' your *comether** on her, is it? Is that what you say, Redmond a-vich?"

Redmond only shut his eyes and groaned again.

"It's the best way, I tell you. An' Redmond, none of us can afford to be found out; an' as I said afore, an' all along, never fear me; I'll dhraw far off from you, where you can send me somethin' for the bit and the sup, and where I'll get the priest, an' ax God's pardon for my past life, every day he spares me, from this out, an' never come next or near you; an' Pratt, as he tould you himself, 'ill hould his whist for his own

* Earnest addresses.

sake. But come into him again. It's on my mind to throuble him wid another word."

They returned, and Cushneiche, resuming his broken English, again addressed Mr. Pratt:

"You said in the beginning you believed you knew who was speaking to you. You said afterwards you believed the speech and the voice were like; now, tell the truth still; who am I that stand before you?"

"From every circumstance, I can conclude you are no other than the man who called himself, when twenty years ago we met, Redmond Velasquez: your apparently intimate knowledge of things, which only he and I could know, is my strongest reason for the presumption."

"Well, then; what have you done with the title-deeds you before refused to give up?"

"They are safe in my house."

"Secured, you think, in an iron box, which is chained and locked to the floor of a closet, inside your bedroom?"

"How do you know that?" abruptly demanded Mr. Pratt, in alarm.

"I will tell the truth, too. I went with a few friends to look for them, before you were brought here, this evening; and not finding them in any of your drawers, desks, or lockers, I thought it was likely you might have them in that strong box. But do you know that they are to be got in it now?"

"Villain!" exclaimed Pratt, thrown off his guard, by interpreting this statement and question further than the speaker really had intended—"and you, Redmond Redmond, for I know you listen to me—villains, both, have a care what you do!—If these parchments have been robbed out of my house——"

"Your house, I ask you over again?"—interrupted Cushneiche, in his own voice.

"Ah!" screamed Pratt—"there! I know you now, at least, and perceive my advantage over you;—and by Heaven if——"

"None o' your gab," cried Yellow Sam, poking his pistol at the prisoner's head.

"You dare not injure me, ruffian!" resumed Mr. Pratt—"you dare not take my life!" the prospect of the loss of the title-deeds made him rash and frantic—"or even, were you inclined, there is one among you —Redmond! Redmond, will you see me murdered?"

He tore the bandage off his eyes, and saw, indeed, Redmond and Cushneiche before him, while Yellow Sam was his only guard, and along with them, the only witness of his important admissions, although he had thought that three or four fellows surrounded him.

"Gi' me the word, captain," said Sam.

"Stop, stop!" exclaimed Redmond, as he sprang forward, and knocked the pistol out of his hand. It went off as it fell, and had scarcely exploded, when another shot seemed to answer it at a distance.

"What the duoul is that?" asked Cushneiche.

"One of the cruizers givin' us back our own signal," answered Sam, whose great coat was now thrown by, allowing to be seen his sailor's dress.

"Givin' us a signal, it may be," resumed Cushneiche, "but one of another kind—yes, by the blessed light!—here comes our boys."

Persons were heard running through the retreat, which, so far as Mr. Pratt could now discern, was an arched passage, partially lighted by a rude lamp suspended over the spot where he stood, both extremities gradually fading into darkness: still he was at fault as to where it could be situated.

"Make off! run for your lives!" cried the three or four men who rushed in—"here's the sodgiers from——"

"What side are they comin' from?" briskly, and with an air of courageous self-possession, questioned Cushneiche.

"Sthraight for the ould house," he was answered.

"Did ye hape the stones agin the mouth o' the place?"

"There was no time—they cum hot on us."

"Two o' ye down with the *bresna*, at the other end; then"—lowering his voice as he heard his enemies approaching through the darkened passage—"down

he bough and branch—run, or my curse on ye!"
lisappeared—"an' here, ye two hoise this good
man up, an' folly where Sam 'ill coax ye; asy,
er Pratt, an' don't vex men in a hurry—asy, all,
nd the work—Redmond, a-vich, stick by me, an'
: this"—giving a pistol.
Vretched man!" answered Redmond, dashing it
ground: "do you so soon expect me to train my-
your ways? Begone, and save your miserable
, stand here hoping the first bullet may end
"
leadsthrong gawk o' the duoul!" retorted Cush-
, stamping in one of the fierce and sharp fits
ere habitual to him: "do you think betther men
ourself is to venthre neck an' breath for one that
stir hand or foot to take his own part? off with
ıfther Sam,—off with you, or ma curp on duoul!
—Hell's fire! What's the matther, there below,
v Sam?" as the person he addressed, together
Mr. Pratt and his conductors, hastily returned to
ot on which he and Redmond were disputing.
ioarded, captain," replied Sam; "an' Melay an'
nabbed as they stept from the gang-way."
Iow's that? who nabbed 'em?"
Iore o' the marines, at this end."
ıre they in yet? quick an' tell me."
Iot yet."
'hen, a bould part—hauld silence an' folly me."
his left hand he presented a pistol, and grasped
ger in the other, and he and his three men faced
: direction whence Sam had just appeared. After
steps they all became invisible in the gloom.
ond and Mr. Pratt continued under the lamp,
ormer with his arms folded, in an attitude of
ss despair; the other anxiously listening. There
single shot, soon returned by a volley, that roar-
echoes through the vault, and a moment after,
ieiche, Sam, and one of the men, ran back.
Dhar Dieu! they have it this bout," said Cush-
e, "they war too far in upon us—Bulger is down."
Down—" added Yellow Sam, "an' dead as could
can make him."

"An' whisht!—here's more o' them, closin' on the other side of us—" continued Cushneiche, as the noise of men and arms sounded at the end of the vault by which Mr. Pratt had entered. Nearly at the same instant, a body of soldiers appeared, the officer at their head crying out—"Surrender, or no quarter." The old robber hastily turned upon the new comers one savage glance of baffled courage and desperation, while his lips, parting from his set teeth, gave such a brindling grin as the bull-dog is noted for, and then hurling his hanger upon the pistol Redmond had cast on the straw beneath their feet, said—"Now, ma-bouchal, you have your will for the two of us—an' I wish you joy of the neck-stock you'll wear the next market-day;" and he stood for the soldiers.

"I will believe you think I am obliged for this timely service, Lieutenant Noble," said Mr. Pratt, extending his hand to the officer, to whom he was known—"who led you on?"

"A servant or follower of yours, I believe, Mr. Pratt; a long-legged, wavering figure of a fellow, with a face the colour of my coat; and the sheerest coward, notwithstanding, unhanged, this moment."

"You must mean Cotteril—where is he?"

"Where is he?—skulking in some hiding-hole of the old ruin abroad; he ran back at the first flash of powder; perhaps the pause in affairs may give him courage to crawl out."

Two shots, in quick succession, interrupted the officer, who faced round, and prepared his men for a new rencounter. Cushneiche listened attentively. Mr. Pratt grew pale. The reverberation of the shots had not died away, when the clashing of a sword, accompanied by a voice which Mr. Pratt recognized as that of his faithful Billy Cotteril, took up the echo.

"Folly afther me, sodgiers—never venthre, never win!—little harum is done on me, though the bullets came near enough—an' what's the matther about ten Bill Cottherils, for the sake o' the poor masther—folly afther me, sodgier-boys—we'll gain the day, somehow or someway—Chrosh-a-chreestha!" as he made his ap-

pearance flourishing a naked sword round his head—"how did ye come for to get afore me, sodgiers?"

"Who fired the shots, you amusing poltroon?" demanded the officer.

"There was three—maybe more, somehow, but three for sart'n—three desperate *rooluchs** iv 'em—an' they war set upon bein' the death o' poor Bill Cotteril—only we did'nt let 'em, somehow, or someway:" while he spoke, he pulled off his hat, and holding it up to the light, with a smiling—"ha—faiks it's we have the loock on our side," exhibited two bullet holes in the crown.

"Where did you meet the men that fired at you?" continued Lieutenant Noble.

"Arragh, Sir, he fired the shots, himself," said Cushneiche; "you'd hear the bawls out of him, for a good mile o' ground, if a gorçoon only showed him the mouth of a quart bottle: he'd lose six inches of his ungainly hoith if a *farh-breeacha*† only wagged the *caubeen* at him, in a blast o' wind—see here—" dexterously snatching a pistol from the champion's breast, "it isn't long sence this gave a bark, any how;" and the officer, examining the pistol, ascertained, indeed, that it bore the marks of recent explosion.

"A civil, quite, asy kind iv a life, is a good kind iv a life to lade, masther Cushneiche," said Cotteril, moving off from the robber towards his master.

"Where are we, at present, Cotteril?" asked Mr. Pratt.

"I'd be bould to say there was onct a power of good licqer haped up in this undher-ground place, here, when the Graces lived in their glory," answered Cotteril.

"How did you discover the haunt?"

"Avoch, someway or somehow. There was a boy we know, an' he had the knowledge iv a boy o' the Bulgers; an' the boy we know, spakin' somehow wid

* Wicked looking fellows.

† Liar—The scare-crow set up in a corn-field.

Thady Bulger on one thing or another, put in that he could bring him to a body 'ud give him the honest worth for ould watches, or ould silver plates, or ould silver moogs, or things o' the sort, an' a bargain was sthruck; an' Thady went his road for the little matthers: an' there was a body afther him that went along, quite an' asy, afther a manner he has, an' he seen Thady comin' an' goin'; an' so Bill Cottherill cum to a knowledge, someway or somehow."

"The duoul mend Bulger, then," whispered Cushneiche to Yellow Sam.

"He arned the worth o' the bullet," assented Sam.

"Let us despatch our business," said Lieutenant Noble. "Have we a prisoner here, Mr. Pratt?" glancing to where Redmond stood; his arms still folded, and his face and air betokening the dogged indifference he really felt: "have we any prisoner, after his excellency, Cushneiche, the fellows abroad with the sergeant, and these two others?"

Mr. Pratt was silent, but a glance passed between him and Cotteril, who answered,

"Avoch, Captain, sure Masther Redmond, there, must be caged, too; I'll gi' you an honest oath, plump,—an' Bill Cottheril wouldn't hurt his poor sowl for a threasure o' goold—"

"For never a laffina undher a crown piece," interrupted Cushneiche.

"I'll gi' you my oath, plump, that he's at the head of all that cum acrass us, someway or somehow: I'll swear out, clane, on the green cloth, I seen him, a week agone, *cullodgin'* wid Cushneiche on the top o' the first hill, outside o' the house; and I'll give the honest, civil oath, agin, that they turned off as thick as any gossips, together, an' is livin' together, afther a manner ever sence like——Sodgiers!" interrupting himself, and making a long stride in among them, as Cushneiche, with a—"Stand out o' the way, you ballour!" seized him by the arm, and twisted him aside.

From all that had lately passed between his master and him, as well as from the signal just given, Mr. Cotteril believed it his business to involve Redmond in as much danger as possible.

"What do *you* say, Mr. Pratt?" asked the officer. The person he addressed, started from a reverie, and then seemed to answer by turning to his ward.

"First, Redmond, let the plunder of the strong-box be given up."

"I know nothing of it," replied Redmond.

"Nor I, either," added Cushneiche; "that was all a notion o' your own makin'."

"Is it the sthrong-box you're afeard about masther?" asked Cotteril; "praise be to God, that's safe an' sound, any how: they thried their best to break it open, or lift it, bud they were forced to let it alone, afther a manner; jist as if a body found a mare's nest, or caught ahault iv a Tarthar, someway or somehow."

"Are you sure this is true, Cotteril?" asked Mr. Pratt, advancing close, and speaking in a whisper to his prime minister: "have you seen it safe, after them?"

"Wid my two rasonable eyes, plase your honour, that's not used to be makin' mistakes, any how."

"Go on with your charges against him, notwithstanding," continued Mr. Pratt, in a close whisper: "insist—whatever I say—on having him arrested;" and Mr. Pratt walked away.

Mr. Cotteril, fully taking his cue, turned the tobacco quid in his cheek, gave a preparatory emission, looked virtuously determined, stretched out one leg, and with the point of his sword, (the weapon could not have been in more harmless hands) in lieu of his usual appendage, the switch, began to scrape together the straws and rushes that strewed the floor of the vault.

"Bill Cottheril had always an' ever the karácther to be honest, an' quite, an' asy; an' it's a way wid him to have more likin' for honest doins', an' for fair dalins', than for the bit an' the sup; an' so, masther, I can't be led or said by you: an' when I only do what's right an' honest, little fear, plase God, but some other 'ill gi' me mate an' dhrink, an' the manes iv honest livin': an' for the same rason, Captain, afther a manner, you'll saze upon our poor slob, masther Redmond; there's a fair oath for id."

"I will make you smart for refusing my earnest request," said Mr. Pratt; "this is insolent and ungrateful."

"Och, there's no help for id, any how or any way; we must see right done, whatever comes across poor Bill Cottheril."

"Does this determine my course of duty, Mr. Pratt?" continued the officer.

"You shall judge for yourself, Sir," answered Pratt; "but if I had my will here, it should not be so."

Lieutenant Noble advanced to Redmond.

"I am sorry, Mr. Redmond, for old acquaintance sake, that this becomes my duty."

"Mind your duty, Sir, and mind me only as far as your duty concerns me," said Redmond, proudly and savagely.

"Bind the other prisoners, and lodge them in the gaol at ——," resumed the lieutenant.

"But surely, Sir, this youth may accompany you thither without undergoing such an indignity?" pleaded Mr. Pratt.

"It was my intention that he should, Sir."

"I will accept no paltry obligation at one side or the other, good gentlemen," said Redmond; "I want it not, I despise it; bind me;" stretching out his arms.

"The tyin' iv him 'll make him go more quite an' asy, afther a manner," exhorted Cotteril.

"Silence, fellow," cried the officer sternly, "or—let me see what my duty permits me to do with you—I will set *you* to guard your little friend, Cushneiche, alone, and leave *him* unbound to give your zeal fair play."

"Why then only do that, Sir, in jest or arnest," said Cushneiche with a grim smile, as the soldiers tied his arms behind his back, "an' whatever happens on the road, by the sowl o' my father, I'll never thry to gi' ye the slip—only," fixing a glance on Cotteril, "a body may 's well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb."

"We're too quite an' asy in oursefs, for a thing o' the sort," demurred Cotteril, skulking into the background.

In a short time all left the retreat, and still in the

dark of the February morning, moved for the town of ——. Mr. Pratt now knew that he had been led into the ruins of an old mansion, formerly belonging to a branch of a noble family of the country, whose estate fell to the crown, during the last civil wars. It was not far from the river over which he had at first been borne, and he perceived that the fording of a second stream, and Cushneiche's allusions to the circumstance, were but a *ruse*, in conjunction with their turning and twining, to baffle his calculation of his real situation. In fact, he had twice crossed the same current.

While Cushneiche and his followers were guarded by the soldiers in a body, Redmond was allowed to walk on singly, under the charge of the sergeant and one file. Having gained, ascending from the river side, the road which led in one direction, to their place of destination, and, in another, through the village, to Mr. Pratt's house, that gentleman paused and advanced to Redmond.

"I need not say how this affects me, Redmond," he began; "but do not be too much cast down; we must now part—it is absolutely necessary, in order that Ellen's fears may be soothed by my appearance at home; but I will visit you in the course of the day, and, notwithstanding the imprudent obstinacy of this ungrateful scoundrel, Cotteril, see what is to be done; 'till then, at all events, the committals shall not be made out; the magistrates are my friends; farewell for a while, Redmond."

He extended his hand. Redmond, motioning to his guards, walked on in silence. Mr. Pratt, with a heavy sigh, turned homeward. Cotteril attended the party.

An hour's march brought them before the gaol door, in the main street of the town. Still the morning had not broke, and the street was as silent as the grave, but for the echoing of their own tramp through it. Cotteril and the sergeant knocked loud and long before the gaoler was roused to attend at the barred entrance With continued zeal, and a few brief and important words of explanation, Cotteril monopolized the duty of giving the prisoners in charge. The gaoler stared

in surprise, when he saw Redmond handed over to his care; and now Cotteril looked more important, and catching the man's eye, as he rubbed all over his chin with the palm of his hand, gave one or two mysterious yet emphatic nods, as much as to say—"all right, I assure you, whatever you may think."

"Gaoler," said Lieutenant Noble, as Redmond passed the grated door—"I will be your authority for any particular attention you can show this poor young gentleman."

"Gaoler," growled Redmond, "let me be treated exactly as my companions are, I am as guilty as they; and whatever they deserve, I deserve."

"It's a thruth he tells you, an' be said by him," observed Cotterill, as he withdrew after the officers and soldiers, and as the gaoler, with a professional twist, shot the first lock on his prisoners.

Until proper apartments could be provided for each, Redmond, Cushneiche, and Yellow Sam were ushered into the gaoler's parlour, and their three companions into another room; and the man went to make his arrangements. Redmond dropped into the first seat he met, and tearing open his coat and vest, as if instinctively to seek a little relief for his stuffed bosom, leaned his elbows on a rude table, and hid his face with his hands. Yellow Sam lounged to the recess of the window, and seating himself at his ease, turned sideways to look out at the sentinel, who was pacing up and down before the entrance. Cushneiche stood opposite to Redmond, attentively regarding him.

After a pause, "All's not lost yet, Redmond," he said, "if you follow the biddin' I gave you." The young man remained silent.

Cushneiche continued in an angry and bitter tone—"D'you hear me, man, with your black mop of a head doin' nothin' there, on your two big claws o' hands? Will you rouse yourself, I say, while there's a minute left for the word that's to save or hang us all? Give an ear, I tell you, to the ould attorney and to me, that has the right to command you in this purty pickle, at laste, an' you can yet save yourself, an', us that you

brought here along with you;—if you set him at his best, an' that he has nothin' for it but to take care of himself, are you sich an *ownshuck* as to think he'll let us out o' this little cage to go to law with him? Gallows end to the heed the boy takes o' me.—Shake yourself, I bid you again!" continued Cushneiche, smartly slapping him on the shoulder. Redmond leaped up.

"Do not touch me!" he cried—"let us die without a touch, as we have lived. And you talk to me of life, after this? of an estate, and wealth, and rank, and a marriage? And you suppose—but yes, *you can* suppose it."

"Suppose what?" asked Cushneiche, slowly advancing to Redmond, his brows knitted, and his glance earnestly fixed on the youth's open bosom—"an' this," snatching at the locket, that since his visit to Phillip's old castle, hung round Redmond's neck—"this, along with it—what am I to suppose about this? In the name o' the blessed saints in heaven, where did you get this, gorçoon? Tell me the thruth, an' tell it in a word, for I hear the gaoler comin', an' there's only a breath left for life an' death, an' for wondhers greater than life or death can clear up—spake, I say! where did you get it? It's the second time I asked you about a keep-sake, and the second manes more than the first: let me look closer at it." As he held the locket at the length of the chain, Cushneiche, much agitated, caught up a candle and rivetted his eyes on the trinket—"By the wide world it's the very one! Sam, come here and look at this!" Sam rose indifferently from his observations at the window, but when he had gained a glance at the article Cushneiche held out to his inspection, his manner suddenly changed into that of some wonder and interest. "Do you know it?" continued Cushneiche—"did you ever see it afore?"

"Did I ever see any thing afore? wasn't it my own hands that tuck it from him?"

"Him! who?"—demanded Redmond, at last rousing himself from the surprize and the struggle of the thousand hopes and conjectures that vaguely and darkly sprung up in his bosom—"what do you mean? who

was its owner? have I any concern with who or what he was?"

"Answer us, before we answer you, man!" continued Cushneiche, his impatience increasing—"I hear the step in the passage—hell's fire! why don't you say where you got it?"

"Go, when you can, to one of the old castles we passed this morning, by the river-side, and there you will find the man in whose possession I found it."

"Do you mane the man they call Padhre-na-Moulh?"

"Yes, and in the secret place I got this trinket, there were other things that would, perhaps, have more surprized you."

"What things? spake! quick, quick!"

"Pistols, a sea-dirk, a hoard of gold and silver."

"That's himself, Sam!" interrupted Cushneiche, slapping the table—"he's to the fore, yet!"

"An' we thinkin' him well hanged these score years," added Sam in a tone of deep wonderment, as the gaoler unlocked the parlour door.

"Now, Masther Cushneiche, an' now Masther Yellow Sam, every convaniency is ready, wid our sarvice to you," said the man, advancing, followed by two sturdy helpers, each of whom held a pair of bolts and handcuffs.

"Wait a moment," said Redmond, "only a moment, good fellow; I have to speak a parting word with these men—"

"Never a moment; an' never a word, Masther Redmond; it's clane against the rule o' the house; and more betoken, them an' you has words enough already, an' too many, the neighbours tell me, for your good—so quick wid the mittins an' the spanshels, boys," to the turn-keys, who seemed to require no stimulus in expediting the work they had already taken kindly in hand.

"Say whatever you have to say aloud, Cushneiche," cried Redmond, vehemently—"one word will be a relief to me—am I concerned in this discovery?"

"Boats'n," said Cushneiche, handing something to

the gaoler, "you may 's well not refuse me a pig's whisper with the poor young gintleman"—and encouraged by the benevolent grin with which the bribe was put up, he shuffled in his bolts to Redmond, and said at his ear—"you'll hear more of it an' me afore there's much danger; I don't value these bits o' spanshells no more than a twist o' straw; nor Sam either; we ever an' always go provided agin them; an' as for the ricketty ould cage itself, a vexed linnet could peck his way out of it—so hould a brave heart ma-bouchel. When you see Pratt, in the coorse o' the day, jest be said an' led by him, if it was only to throw dust in his eyes, *now*"—laying peculiar emphasis on the last word: "an' so, God speed you!—I can say no more till we meet again." He turned away—"Thankee, boats'n, an' here we go for your other convaniencies." Before Redmond could urge a word, he was locked up, alone, in the parlour.

To prevent, perhaps, disagreeable interruptions in another place, it shall here be noticed how far Cushneiche was able to keep some of the promises he had held out to Redmond at parting.

About three o'clock the same day, the gaoler's wife went out into the garden to cut a few cabbages, as an accompaniment to the piece of corned beef, which for some time had been simmering on the kitchen fire; and all good Irish cooks are aware, that it should have been so simmering for some time before the vegetables were put in to boil along with it. The garden lay outside the high bounding wall of the gaol, enclosed by its own lower walls. A capacious sewer, running under the gaol-yard, and under the foundations of the gaol-wall, passed beneath it: but of this the good woman was not aware. Waddling between two rows of her flourishing cabbages, picking her steps through the over moist soil, and having her garments tucked and pinned up to save them from the heavy drops she brushed down at every step, the unsuspecting *gouvernante* had already decapitated two plump heads of "early Dutch," when, fixing her eye upon a third, just at her feet, she thought it moved. Startled, she drew back a little, keeping her

glance on the charmed head of cabbage; became convinced it was self-agitated, and grew stupified with fright; but her consternation did not gain a climax until it actually jumped about the trench, and until another head, of a different kind, popped up into its place, and the mouth sputtering forth clay, opened its keen grey eyes and fixed them upon hers. Without power to utter a cry significant of her alarm, the terrified dame dropped senseless where she stood, her heavy fall and considerable bulk of person doing some injury among the much-prized vegetables around her; and it was only when her husband, growing impatient for his dinner, and finding the beef left boiling away in the pot, came out to look after her, that she recovered in his arms, and could vent her heart in hysteric screams, accompanied by a few incoherent words of explanation. Those few words were sufficient, however, to indicate to the old man-trap keeper the real cause of her fright. Leaving her, with a muttered curse, to take care of herself, he hastened back to his citadel, descended to the dungeon, in which his own hand had locked up Cushneiche and Yellow Sam, and found it empty; and pieces of broken plaster, scattered under the lowest part of the low garden wall, afterwards assured him that during his wife's swoon the fugitives had not remained forgetful of the completion of their purpose.

"The little saws an' the files that cut them boults," soliloquised the sad and discomfited gaoler, as he contemplated the articles he spoke of, on the floor of the cell—"war hid in the soles o' the brogues the raps had on 'em; for we sarched all over their bodies well, not forgetting a peep into the brogues themselves; and here," he continued, when he returned to the garden wall—"here's the spot where the two ould mast-climbers got over, in no time."

CHAPTER X.

About half an hour after Redmond had been left alone in the parlour, the proprietor returned to conduct him to his more regular quarters. Whether influenced by Lieutenant Noble's request, or by his own feelings, the man did not doom his young prisoner to such a cell as had been allotted to Cushneiche and Yellow Sam. He introduced him, in fact, into the debtors' region of the prison, and with much self-flattering eulogy of the comforts and respectability of the place, locked up Redmond in a low arched apartment, eight or nine feet square, and having a rough deal table and a ricketty chair, for its only furniture.

Again the young man flung himself into a chair by the table, and hid his face on his hands. It cannot be said that he thought; the confusion of his mind did not allow of a process meriting the name; still all the poignant, and, indeed, wonderful views his situation presented, came in succession before him. It had been proved that he was the son of a mean and disgraced person, and all his hopes of life—life itself, were henceforth annihilated. They spoke to him of wealth to be obtained by accommodating himself to circumstances, and by a prudent plan of concealment; he trampled on that prospect. He would not accept existence on such terms. He would seek death in every shape, far away from Ireland, if, indeed, the present charges against him were not preferred to the death; and of this, although he could not pause to balance the reasons why, he felt doubtful. Every thing was lost to him; Rosalie too—and at this thought it will not seem surprising if, at his age, he suffered to escape him the sorest groan his reveries had called forth.

What was the nature of the vague promises Cushneiche had held out to him at parting?—what caused him to hold them out? what meant the robber's agitation at the sight of the locket? That was the real question. Had the trinket called up recurrences in

which he was personally concerned? or—and Redmond here brought to mind the comment of Yellow Sam upon the supposed fate of its original owner—had it merely reminded the freebooters of a comrade whom they had thought dead, and dead in shame and infamy?—Redmond started at the sudden association his disarranged mind had not before perfectly made,—Peter of the Castle was that former comrade. The hidden hoard, the weapons, confirmed this notion, even if Cushneiche's assertion could be doubted. And the mystery of Padhre's long life of seclusion and penance was now explained; he had been overtaken by remorse in the midst of his sinful career, submitted himself to the expiations prescribed by his church—perhaps added to them, himself—and withdrawn from the world, under a changed name, to make his peace with God. But how did all this concern Redmond? For the hundredth time he held up the locket, and pored over the initials A. P. which were set in pearls and brilliants upon one side of it; they suggested no name of which he had ever heard; they could not relate to him; they indicated, perhaps, the name of some female to whom the hermit-robber had been attached in his youth; he let the trinket drop out of his hand with indifference. Yet Padhre's uniform interest in him again occurred to tantalize Redmond's mind; their last interview, too, and the other appointed interview for which the day was now near at hand: he wished he could once more see Padhre; he wished he could keep that appointment; he would inform him of the proof of his parentage, so lately confirmed; perhaps the step might lead to something, he knew not what; and Redmond groaned, and his brow flamed, as he ended in the conjecture that Padhre's interest had only grown out of his having recognized him to be the son of the wretched man who now claimed him—the solitary's former partner in crime.

This started another supposed case: Padhre had early learned from Cushneiche himself, the secret of Redmond's connexion with Pratt; and, to avoid exposure of the character of his miserable parent, and, indeed,

of all the strange circumstances Pratt had confessed, the hermit advised his union with Pratt's daughter.—"Poor Ellen," sighed Redmond, as, for the first time, his mind calmly contemplated her in the view in which Padhre's assurances, and, afterwards, her father's own story, had placed her. Did she really love him as was said? Love him to the injury of her happiness and life? And must he blame his own attentions for her feelings? His heart softened a little. Rosalie was lost for ever; he could not love Ellen as he loved Rosalie, or as Ellen loved him; but, every other motive and consideration apart, did not honour and humanity call on him to——No, no! he would not disgrace her, even to make her momentarily happy. Were his name and descent honourable, he might, after a time, passively sacrifice his life to save or cheer hers; but she would not continue to love the son of an outlaw; and he particularly shrunk from the subject, when he considered the alliance as one of prudence on his part; as one that would ensure to him, without further exposure, the wealth his bandit-father had amassed, and of which, come what might, he determined never to share as much as would give him an hour's sustenance.

His prison-door was unlocked, and Mr. Fenelly, the old Roman Catholic clergyman, approached him. Redmond felt offended at an intrusion he thought could have been prompted by mere idle curiosity; in a sullen mood, arose, and after a slight bow, walked to the window.

"You think I have no right to visit you, my good young man," began the priest; "but I think I have. You know I am intimately acquainted with a lady you are interested about."

Redmond turned abruptly and looked his question.

"I mean Miss D'Arnell, Sir; you are aware that, being of my persuasion, and I being an old man, our friendship is particular. Well, I come to speak a word to you from Miss D'Arnell."

Redmond started to the only chair in the apartment, and placed it near the priest.

"You threw yourself in her way last night, as she

was riding home," continued Mr. Fenelly, "and shocked her much with the confirmation from your own lips, of a shocking story; and you added some allusions, and some account of your feelings and actions, to which she could not reply at the time. But now she sends by me a return to the long farewell you made her, and is anxious to have me say, that, although you and she can never meet again, she shall be deeply afflicted, as a former friend, to hear any accounts of your conduct in the present trying circumstances which may appear unworthy of the mind and heart you inherited from the Giver of all good, and improved under liberal habits of education."

"I am thankful to the lady, Sir, for the compliment and for the good advice, and also for the doubt the good advice involves."

"Make your own comments. But now, perhaps, you will kindly allow me to express my own sincere regrets for your sufferings, and a few of my own views in your regard:—pray hear me out. In this second instance, I am not so very officious as you may think, either. However strange it may sound, I am rather intimately concerned in all that concerns you. I can influence your fate. Do not stare at me, young man, in doubt or wonder; I speak the words of truth; and, if you live, you shall witness that I do."

"Go on, Sir. How can all this be? You owe me an explanation, and in justice, honour, mercy, will give it at a word."

"Justice, honour, mercy, supply the precise reasons why I must not. Again I request you not to be impatient with an old man that really means you well, and deals in no juggling talk or tricks. Indeed, it was no part of my duty to have said even so much to you before; and so much you would never have heard from me, but for your present unexpected situation. But believe me still in what I say. I have a great deal to do with you; and from a full knowledge of your prospects, I have a right to advise any step I may think for the best. Therefore, attend to me. You have won the affections of a most amiable young person; her happiness is in your hands. Her father, I can learn, is not

averse to the idea of your making her your wife; your honour whispers that you should; your interests, your safety command it. I, who am a judge of your interests, feel convinced you should not hesitate; and, in fact, a greater question than any you are yet aware of, a question connected with the lives and the good name of others—hangs upon your decision.—Farewell."

The clergyman had moved to the door as he spoke the last words. "Think me no juggler, I repeat, and do not hastily reject my advice." He withdrew.

Redmond stood overwhelmed with surprise. Here was a new actor in the embarrassed scene he could not have dreamt of. Here was another individual linked with his fate—if, indeed, the priest's solemn assertions were true—between whom and himself no kind of connection had seemed possible. And here was this new-found friend recommending, along with all former ones, a certain measure. He appeared to dream. His real existence appeared to have changed into something imaginary. These were not the every-day chances of life; perplexing mystery surrounded him. But a recollection of one part of the priest's discourse aroused him to a bitter sense of reality. It was the message from Miss D'Arnell. Well! they were separated for ever; and the lady lost no time in confirming the fact. His proud nature boiled high. Forgetting all the good reasons that, at another time, he would have allowed, nay, that he had himself submitted to her for her resolution, he could only feel he had been slightly treated; and he would show less of disappointment than, perhaps, was reckoned on;—and here Ellen again strongly occurred, but merely as a medium of revenge upon Rosalie.

Before he could farther proceed with his perplexed reveries, the door again opened, and Mr. Pratt came into the room, looking sad and care-worn; Redmond's notice of him was strange; he did not know in what manner to return his salute.

"I have staid away too long, Redmond," the gentleman began, (it was now past three o'clock in the afternoon, "but I could not help it. Ellen was to have

been quieted, the magistrates spoken with regarding the committals; and, above all, that intemperate and ungrateful fellow, Cotteril, brought to task. But I am sorry to inform you, I seem to possess little influence over him in this serious matter. He persists in his determination to prosecute."

"Well, be it so."

"God forbid we should dismiss the subject so indifferently. God forbid I, at least, was so unnatural as to do so! For, Redmond, apart from my sincere and unchanged good-will to you, a father's feelings give me an interest, an absorbing interest in it. Should any real evil happen to you, my child—I must speak *out*, Redmond, though it appear indelicate—my beloved child would not survive the blow."

"I do not understand you, Sir."

"Redmond, I am forced to be explicit. This moment, though she knows nothing of your present perilous situation, Ellen's fears on account of your absence are sinking her into the grave. The love, the infatuation with which you have inspired her, could not remain hidden from a parent's eyes. And you know her tender constitution, you know—"

"Mr. Pratt, do not utterly distress me. I was, until your astonishing assertions, quite ignorant of the great honour Ellen did me. I do not require to be now appealed to on the subject; its bare mention by you is sufficient for every purpose."

"Well, then, Redmond, hear what I have to say. Although Cotteril is obstinate, and although it will cost me a great and peculiar effort and sacrifice to turn him from his course; yet, give me a competent motive and I will venture far to do it. I cannot now explain the nature of the important steps that will here be necessary; another time you shall know of them; enough for me that I feel them to be important, and not to be taken except as a last resource; and enough for you that I repeat, supply me with the natural motive, and they shall be taken."

"Allow me to be as explicit as you are, Mr. Pratt. Supposing me to estimate as I ought, as any man ought,

the honour your most amiable child confers on me; can I, consistent with manliness or fair-dealing, ask her to share the darkened lot that, no matter how long I live, must be mine?"

"She would share any lot with you, any that awaits you; although, unless you provoke it by your own obstinacy, Redmond, I see none she can consider questionable."

"Does that intimate, Sir, that Ellen may become my wife unaware of the disgrace of the recent discovery to which you are a witness?"

"No, she is fully aware of the discovery you mean, only Ellen thinks it no disgrace to you." This was assertion merely; Mr. Pratt had kept his daughter ignorant of all connected with Redmond, from the moment he left the house.

"On the contrary, Redmond, she thinks, and truly thinks, that, passing by your unhappy father, I should be more disgraced by a public exposure of the details of the whole matter, than you can be. But there, for all our sakes, is the thing to be avoided. Look closer at the facts. If your father is prosecuted by your side, he will, in revenge or self-defence, expose the connexion between you and him, while making his accusations against me."

"My God, my God!" groaned Redmond.

"Although such accusations cannot save him—save his life—Redmond, nor alas——"

"My life. Speak on, without considering that."

"Nor hers who——"

"It does not require argument, I repeat, sir."

"But, although indifferent to your own fate, and leaving Ellen's out of the question, surely, Redmond, the simple duty of snatching from a shameful end, your own father——" continued Mr. Pratt, fully aware of the efficacy of pressing this point as often and as home as possible, "surely this alone will arouse you to some exertion."

"Mr. Pratt, demanded Redmond, abruptly indulging an abrupt thought—"can you imagine what mo-

tive sent the old priest, Mr. Fenelly, to me this morning?"

"He visited you this morning, then?" in a surprised tone; although the speaker was far from being surprised, inasmuch as the visit spoken of had arisen out of a conversation between him and Mr. Fenelly, early that morning, when the clergyman called on Mr. Pratt to be informed of the cause of Redmond's incarceration, about which he felt greatly surprised and interested; and Mr. Pratt had absolutely urged him to undertake the last topic we have heard him press on the youth's notice.

Redmond satisfied Mr. Pratt's question; and when with much solemnity that gentleman assured him he could not guess the priest's motive, the young man continued.

"Do not think, Sir, from my changing the subject, that I am indifferent to the fate of even such a parent as it has been the will of Heaven to give me. If I have not alluded to his situation, it was because I dreaded to do so, not because I forgot it."

"Take him out of it, then, Redmond; snatch him from a fate that must expose and destroy us all—free the wretched man of the irons that, while we speak, fetter him."—We again interrupt Mr. Pratt to say that Cushneiche and Yellow Sam had escaped before he came to the gaol; that he had heard as much; but that the persons around Redmond had received his strict injunctions not to inform the youth of the fact. "Come, Redmond; rise up, and come with me, and all will be well;—why can you hesitate a moment to be led by one whose happiness and honour are bound up in yours? Alas! why did you ever hesitate to do so? There began all our present troubles. You have not, you never had, Redmond, a cause to feel distrustful of me. If I suppressed the facts of your real parentage, what but a feeling for your future peace and respectability prompted me? Now that, at your own seeking, you know them, were it not better they had remained unknown? And look at my whole conduct towards you; look at my care of you in school and col-

lege. Redmond, I do not attempt to deny that my penury, at the time I became only the agent to your great estate, suggested griping and dishonest thoughts; for the toiling and needy, wealth has sore temptations; and no doubt, so far as your unhappy parent was concerned, I sinfully indulged hopes and calculations unworthy of a Christian; but human nature is weak, Redmond. Perhaps, with my strong suspicions of the character of that man, and with the voice of the law and of justice rising up on my side against him, some extenuation may be allowed to my conduct;—leaving it quite inexcusable, however, how has a single act or view of my life, for twenty years, injured *you*, Redmond? I educated you as a gentleman. I treated you as one. From the hour my child was born, I destined you to possess every acre of the property; when you left the house, I had not given up my intention; it forms, at this moment, the great wish of my heart; come home with me, Redmond;—come to your own home;—possess it, and enjoy it;—assume the rank and character your considerable means ensure to you;—we can so arrange, that the connection between you and the prisoner in his dungeon, under us, shall never be known;—he is not disposed, I am sure, to aggrieve you;—if his life be now saved, he will surely consent to live far away from Ireland, on your bounty."

Redmond brought to mind, indeed, that Cushneiche had more than once proposed these very terms.—"The rumour that, above all others, makes you my nephew, may remain uncontradicted for ever; and here, on your own estate——"

"Mr. Pratt," interrupted Redmond, "to part of your plan my mind is irrevocably averse. If, indeed, I am honoured, so far as you say, by the good opinion of your excellent daughter, she and I shall never remain here to expose ourselves even to the chance of disgrace. Some other country must be our future home. And further, the wealth you speak of as mine, I shall never accept; enough that the blood of a common bandit runs in my veins; I shall never live and

fatten upon his plunder;—oh, God! perhaps upon the product of orphans' and widows' tears, and the blood of my fellow-creatures. No, Sir; I am young, and the world is open to me, as it has been to other men. I will go home with you on these terms, and on no other."

"Well; come home, with any exceptions to the future that your present distressed feelings naturally take, dear Redmond. I cannot wonder to hear you utter some little vehemence and extravagance; pardon me, and do not interrupt me: reflection and time may cause material changes of opinion. Give me your hand, and let me congratulate you on a new and closer tie betwixt us, and at the same moment, on your liberation from this place. If I solemnly pledge myself as security for your immediate removal, the people will at once let you come, until I can take my last measures with Cotteril, and again see the magistrates. Let us hasten home, and conclude our private arrangements this very evening. Marriage articles will take little time to prepare, and less in the signing. Come, my carriage is outside. To-morrow morning we shall come back together, and free the other prisoners."

He knocked at the door of the apartment. The gaoler appeared. He declared himself responsible, as he had said he would do, for taking Redmond away; and in a few minutes they were seated together in Mr. Pratt's carriage, and driven rapidly out of the town.

"Well," thought Redmond, "my course is begun, wherever it may lead; my fate known for the present, however it may become fixed; and shattered and darkened as is my mind, one little ray of gratification breaks in with the hope that even by sacrificing myself, unknown to her, I may promote the happiness of one of the gentlest of God's creatures. It will, indeed, be but a gloomy relief; for my own heart there is no hope of fire-side joy. It must brood over the past till it stupifies or breaks."

Mr. Pratt had his reverie, too. "No wiser saying than that which teaches a man to be watchful of circumstances and to accommodate himself to them. If

the torrent cannot be crossed in a bold straight line, some little swimming with its stream may land one safely at the opposite side. Assuredly, the greater part of wisdom is coolness when others are hot; in fact, fools make sages. Yet, in my present success, caution and temporising alone have not won the battle. I have been powerfully assisted by chance—say my usual good fortune; and in a way, too, that while I took my advantage of it, I did not, then, and cannot yet understand. But no matter about that mystery now; a time will come for unravelling it at leisure."

The time was nearer at hand than he thought.

Little conversation ensued between the gentlemen on the road homeward. Mr. Pratt's remarks were confined to anticipations of the joy and relief their safe return would give Ellen. They gained that point of the road approaching the hill, which led down to the village, and which commanded to their right hand, and under them, a view of the banks of the river, and the group of old castles. At sight of the ruins, from the carriage window, Redmond bethought of his late wish to have a last interview with Padhre; and now, even supposing him not to meet the solitary at home, he determined—if for no other purpose than to replace the locket,—upon leaving the carriage awhile, and walking down the descents to the water. When he signified his intention, Mr. Pratt looked surprised, if not suspicious of, perhaps, an attempt to escape, and desired to know Redmond's business with Padhre. His companion gave some slight reason, but would not be denied; Mr. Pratt could keep him in view and wait in the carriage for him, he said; and he got out and bent his way down to the river side.

Approaching the ruins, he saw Padhre's two old attendants hobbling, at a considerable distance, along the water's edge; Padhre himself was not with them or before them, but he might have walked out of view. Redmond gained his castle, and his cell-door. The bundle of hay filled the outer archway; he pushed it in, entered, and Padhre's wailing "oh—h, oh—h," sounded in his ear.

Looking round, he saw him stretched, undressed, upon his humble couch, appearing, from the listless way he lay, and from the unusual paleness of his cheek and brow, to be exhausted with sickness. His voice, too, as he gave his complaining challenge, sounded feeble and hoarse.

"I have returned to see you, Padhre," Redmond began, sitting on the deal box, "before the time you named, because I thought you'd be glad to hear I was going to do your bidding at last." Padhre ceased his cry, as if attentively listening. "Yes, Padhre, I have lost for ever her whose smile was the only one that can ever cheer my young life, and I am about to unite myself to another woman, who, although worthy of any man's love, I can never love, and whose soft and unsuspecting affection for me, must, till I die, and God send that may be soon, only bring endless tears from my eyes and heart."

Redmond's own voice now faltered; Padhre held up his hands, as if to bless and thank his protégé, and afterwards made signs to the effect that his sad forebodings were imaginary, and that all happiness would attend his choice. "No, no, good friend; and if ever you had felt a true love, you could not think it," continued Redmond; "if ever you had felt the promise made, morning and night, to your heart in a younger day, that only one other heart alone could bring it joy and contentment, that only one eye could bless it with a smile, and only one hand confer a pledge worth the taking—and, oh, Padhre! if, after this, you had ever seen that heart darkened to you, that eye clouded, that hand drawn back and kept for another, you would feel with me how hopeless a thing it is, in the first breaking of youth, to—" Tears, the vent of his blacker feelings of the previous night, stopped Redmond, and he could perceive that the poor listener wept too, turning on his couch to hide a bitter agitation; and as the young man recollected the little locket and the tress of shining black hair, his heart smote him with the notion of his having placed before Padhre, in his suppositious case, a true picture of the wretch's former experience and feelings.

"And I came to tell you another story, Padhre," continued Redmond, after a short pause; "you know I have been bred up without a father, or the knowledge of one; but I came to tell you I have at last found out my father."

The hermit, forgetting the physical depression that had evidently weighed him down, started up on his elbow, and looked wildly at Redmond.

"Yes, old friend; last night my father's claim to me was proved; and a robber is that father."

"They lie that brought you the story!" exclaimed Padhre, in a tone so deep and loud that the old ruin echoed to it: and as he spoke, completely shaking off the sickness of his body, he sprang to his feet with such a stern energy, and showed a bearing so lofty and grand, that, recollecting the long silence of his life, and the former quietness and humility of his air, Redmond was also startled to his feet.

"Who blinded you with that fable, boy?" continued Padhre, as they confronted each other. "Answer me, in a word, that I may confound them!—I break an awful vow for this;" he went on, dropping on his knees;—"but, oh! good and merciful God!—thou witnesseth how suddenly it has taken me, and how great is the temptation to loose my tongue at last in a communion with my fellow creatures! No presumption, no thought of worthiness, no forgetfulness of my sin prompts the disobedience—the hope to do good—to right the wronged—to speak the truth, that innocence may be shielded, and the enemies of truth defeated;—this alone is my motive!" he bent his head on his breast. Redmond looked and listened in consternation, not wholly unmixed with joyful hope. Although the hermit's tones were loud and intense, his pronunciation was thickened and imperfect, as if a long disuse of the powers and mechanism of the tongue had impaired its facility. Redmond thought it was as if a dead man had been restored to speech, and with his clayey and frozen lips suddenly and lamely attempted the language of a former existence. These fancies confused him. The vehement denial of the story of his parentage supplied the relief to his feelings.

Padhre's mental prayers were ended, and he arose, less agitated, and resumed.

"Do not stand silent, young man, when at last you ought to speak to the purpose. Who imposed the story on you?"

"My guardian, and the man who called himself my father."

"Pratt? what could have been his reason?" (musing) "no matter; a bad one, whatever it was; and one that deprives him, perhaps, of the chance he hitherto had of an alliance with you. And who is the man that acted with him?"

"They certainly did not act together; on the contrary, it was by violence, and to save his life, that Pratt confirmed in my hearing all the facts the other had previously told me."

"Let it be so—but tell me who is that other."

"The robber, Cushneiche; you must have heard of him and seen him."

Padhre appeared astonished to the utmost as he said —"yes, I have heard of him, but we never met—where is he, now? can you inform me?"

"He has spent much of his early life at sea, I understand," said Redmond, first making a remark suggested by sudden associations, and waiting to note its effect.

"Ay, say you so?" in increased interest; "how old is this man? what is his height? what his style of features?"

Redmond gave an accurate description. Padhre listened anxiously.

"Then where can he be found, I say?"

"In the gaol of ——, whence I have this moment escaped, only on conditions of entering into the alliance with Pratt, to which you just alluded."

"Leave me," continued Padhre, after another moment of reflection—"I will see this man in his dungeon, and he shall recant the falsehoods he has told you; and if, by his means, Pratt now wishes to compel you into the measure your declarations and your youthful tears of this evening convince me you dislike, he

shall stand before Pratt, in a few hours, to disclaim any such agency;—he or I can send another. Farewell. I am ill and weak," he continued, placing one hand on his forehead, and the other on his heart. "Since we last met I have been sorely visited with, I hope, the final warning, but Heaven will allow me breath and strength for this, and you may rely on my endeavours."

"Sir," said Redmond, unconsciously using the term of respect and awe with which he now began to regard his companion; "this very evening I have agreed to sign the articles of marriage."

"And do I not promise you help this very evening?"

"Am I then to understand that I must not sign until that help comes?"

A noise as of one entering the castle was heard, and Mr. Pratt's voice called on Redmond.

"Farewell, I say—he comes to summon you; and, as you value your interest, do not stay here to let him hear us speaking together—away, and meet him on the stairs; but," he added, in a low whisper, "do nothing in a hurry, now."

Redmond bounded along the dangerous shelf, that, forming almost two sides of a square, led from Peter's recess to the point communicating with the stairs. Answering with earnest apologies Mr. Pratt's remonstrances for delay, both hurried out of the ruin, gained the carriage, and, soon after, Mr. Pratt's house.

"I must leave you alone, here, Redmond," said Mr. Pratt, when they entered a room, "for a little time. First, I have to see Cotteril, and use with him the last argument for your safety, of the nature of which I may as well now acquaint you. Although from some cause I cannot exactly define, but, perhaps, from your darkness to him, he dislikes you, Redmond, yet Cotteril is alive to my interests, and, above all, adores his young lady. I will tell him, then, waiving all nice feelings, that her happiness, perhaps her life, depends on yours; and *that*, I know, will at once influence him."

"'Tis, indeed, a disagreeable and shocking resource, Sir, considering the connexion between master and servant, and that a lady's secret is concerned."

"Did I not say it was? Do you not recollect my first words on the subject? But, however repulsive, the thing must be done. And next, Redmond, you will have to wait until I inform Ellen of your intentions with respect to her. I suppose you think it as well that I should be your advocate?"

"Certainly, Mr. Pratt," answered Redmond, eagerly catching at a proposal that seemed calculated to save, in a degree, his present peculiar feelings.

"Perhaps it would even be for the best, if, saying in your name all the little matters usual on such occasions, I did away with the necessity of a formal explanation between you and her?"

Redmond again warmly assented. Mr. Pratt would say what *he* wished; and by laying an emphasis as he spoke, Redmond thought to extenuate to his own sense of honour and delicacy, the disingenuousness he felt himself forced to commit.

"Well then, Redmond, another word. If I come to lead you by the hand to Ellen, you will understand that she admits your suit; and, when ye meet, you will promise me to spare her the most remote allusion to any recent occurrences, of which the discussion might be too strong for her feelings."

Redmond once more agreed, and Mr. Pratt left him to prepare Ellen, in his own way, for the coming scene.

He found her in her chamber, touching a little harp, as she sang a mournful song, for the words of which he stopped at her door to listen.

"Oh, when I pause, and think upon
My own green hills and pleasant river,
Where I have blithely roving gone,
To shoot at will my fancy's quiver—
The hope of childhood in my breast,
Free of the chain that since has bound me,
The broad sun sinking in the west,
Air, earth, and water laughing round me:

"When in the silence of the night,
Such recollections swell my sorrow,
I start and loath the coming light
That brings with it no happy morrow;
I wept not that my hopes should flee,
Forgetful of their fond beguiling,
But now I weep that health should be
As fickle as their foolish smiling!"

With a sigh that was speedily followed by a smile, her father entered, before the last cadence of the song was finished. She smiled in return at his approach, but in such sort as sent no joy to his heart.

"My pretty coquet," he began, sitting by her side —"do you remember a promise I made you?"—

Ellen started, blushed, trembled; but answered "No!"

"What!—nothing of a pledge to place a certain person at your feet, within a given time?—and now, suppose the time should even be anticipated?"

And in this strain Mr. Pratt continued, until, according to his plans, he had prepared Ellen to meet Redmond in an hour: and then he went to complete other arrangements.

When the person of whom he spoke, sat down in the apartment where his guardian had left him, he bent his mind to consider all the views of his extraordinary situation. But, more than on any former occasion, he was incapacitated for sober thought. Every recurrence to Padhre's promise to belie Cushneiche's and Pratt's story, sent a rush of joy about his heart that bewildered him; and every recurrence to his engagement with Ellen made him flame with impatience, and, on account of his still countenancing while he hoped to evade it, with shame and some self-contempt. In the hope of being rescued from the infamy of a near alliance with a wretch, visions of Rosalie again flitted over his mind, and tempted him into an ecstasy;—a recollection that to realize these visions he must now, no matter on what account, falsify declarations he had permitted Pratt to make to Ellen, made him wring his hands in despair. More than once he started up, to call out to Mr. Pratt,

and interrupt the interview between him and his gentle daughter, which, each moment, was involving him deeper; but a certain misgiving curbed him. After all, could he—ought he—to place implicit reliance on Padhre's vehement contradictions and incoherent promises?—What warrant had he that they were not of a piece with the occasional insanity attributed to the solitary, and of which some former intercourse between them had seemed to supply certain proof?—At last Redmond came to a determination. He would avoid, as long as possible, any act that could positively commit him to a future course; in fact, he would reckon, as long as possible, on the interference that had been vaguely promised; but if it did not appear at the time within which, every thing considered, it ought naturally to appear, Redmond made up his mind to take Padhre's inconsistency as a demonstration of his madness, and he would then no longer hesitate to save poor Ellen's feelings, and, indeed, his own sense of honour, from a chance of the discovery that he was indifferent to her. If he could not contrive to keep out of her presence, he resolved not to face her with a falsehood even upon his brow, or in his manner; if once they met, he would bind himself to her for ever.

The evening drew on; the room in which he sat, deepened in shadow; and while Mr. Pratt still stayed away, the hours and moments he had allowed himself for a decision expired. At last it grew so late that he gave up all hope, and at the same time, embraced his conditional alternative; and just as his mind came to a point, his guardian entered the apartment.

Advancing slowly to Redmond, he held out his hand in silence, and led him up stairs. Upon the way, Mr. Pratt pressed his ward's hand, but did not feel a return. They entered the spacious and old fashioned drawing-room. It seemed to have been hastily and imperfectly lighted. Upon a table, at the remote end, there was a single lamp, sufficient, however, to show to Redmond's view a folded parchment. Cotteril stood simpering by the table. In a window-recess, to the right-hand side, Ellen was seated.

In continued silence Mr. Pratt led Redmond almost the whole length of the room to salute her. She tried to stand up as they came near, but was obliged to drop in her chair again, trembling and weeping. Without uttering a word, Redmond, not uninterested by her joyful distress, her obvious devotion to him, her weakness and her beauty, sat by her side, took her hands in his, and pressed them tenderly to his lips.

Mr. Pratt had walked to the table, and standing sideways to the young pair, taken up the parchment and employed himself in reading it. Cotteril, grinning and whispering, peered at it over his shoulder. In a few minutes Redmond heard his name softly pronounced by Mr. Pratt. He arose from his silent interview with Ellen, and repaired also to the table.

"Read it, dear Redmond," whispered his guardian, presenting the instrument, "and first see if you approve it; then you can sign at once: Cotterill will witness."

"I am sure there is no need, Sir," replied Redmond, smiling a ghastly smile,—"it must be all perfectly correct; I will sign at once, if you please."

Ducking and grinning, Cotteril began to mend a pen. Mr. Pratt turned towards the end of the apartment near the door; and—"Ay," he thought, "no matter for the explanation of the robber's motive; no matter yet awhile; whatever tempted him to fabricate the story of his connexion with this boy, it has served the purpose; the dread of exposure as the son of such a man compels Redmond to make Ellen his wife; and I want no more at present to set my heart at ease about the future. What is the matter, below?" interrupting his reverie, and speaking aloud, as he walked to the door. Redmond had taken the pen. He started, and laid it down.

A servant ran up stairs, in such speed that he and his master came in contact at the open door, and the man, glancing behind him, and looking agitated, passed Mr. Pratt into the middle of the drawing-room.

"Fellow, what is the matter, I ask!" continued Mr. Pratt.

"There is a stranger below, Sir," answered the man, in a whisper.

"Well?—if it is not Cushneiche again, why should a stranger cause this bustle? Show him into the dining-room, and say I am engaged, but will see him in a few minutes."

"His appearance is so uncommon, Sir—and he takes no notice of us,—but has walked into all the rooms below, as if searching for you—and he will answer no questions, Sir, and speak no word to us;—listen, Mr. Pratt! he walks up stairs."

"That step is not assumed—that is *his* foot, indeed!" muttered Pratt, as he drew backward from the door. Redmond heard a heavy and measured tread coming up to the drawing-room; and presently a tall and gaunt man, habited in a foreign dress, paced one pace into the apartment. His face, indistinct to Redmond through the shadow which wrapt the far end of the room, was very pale; he wore mustachoes; and, without frowning, his black eyes fell on Pratt. After entering, he stopped, and remained motionless as a statue. Redmond thrilled as he gazed at the silent visitor. If the dead could, after a long absence from earth, re-appear in fleshy mould and wonted costume, the figure might suggest supernatural terrors. There was no sympathy in his eye with life, or with the living. His features were fixed in the rest, as well as in the hue of the grave; his very dress seemed colourless and blurred, as if with the dust and the decay of ages. Some such doubts of the nature of his guest appeared to assail Mr. Pratt; for, as his distended eyes returned the stare fastened upon them, he stooped low, pressing his clasped hands between his knees, and the broken breathing that denotes an inward shudder, was, in the deep silence, heard to escape him. The stranger beckoned him forward. He shrunk farther off. The mute command was repeated, again and again, and he at last obeyed it. The stranger stept back through the door, and resumed his signals. Pratt, cringing

into himself, and yet, as if drawn by irresistible force, while his eyes still dwelt on the pale face of his summoner, gradually followed.

"Go not out with him, father!" screamed Ellen, and fell:—but at that instant Pratt had crossed the threshold, and the door closed on him and his visitor.

Redmond sprang to support the senseless girl; Cotteril had run to hide himself in the deep recess of a window. As he held her in his arms, the measured tread of the stranger sounded up the staircase leading to the sleeping apartments; then Redmond heard it, overhead, in Mr. Pratt's bed-chamber; then fainter, in the inner closet; and then it rested. After some time, Mr. Pratt re-entered the drawing-room, alone, holding some legal deeds in his hand; advanced with a tottering step to Redmond; put his left arm round Ellen; with the right held out the parchments to his ward; and when Redmond had taken them, waved his disengaged hand to him, as he said—"Leave my daughter to my own care; and to the only protection she can now expect: these are the documents that make you lord and master of this house. We shall ask the shelter of its roof from you only until she is able to make a journey."

After he had spoken, the stranger's foot went from the door, where it would seem he had been listening, and then down stairs, and out of the house.

CHAPTER XI.

It is now necessary to explain what led to the closing incidents of the last chapter; and for this purpose we must go back, a little.

After Miss D'Arnell's rencounter with Redmond, on her road home from Kitty Tobin's wedding, and after the message sent to him by Mr. Fenelly, we trespass so far on the young lady's private and reserved

feelings as to intimate that she did not experience much peace of mind. True, until the moment he was bidding her an eternal farewell, Redmond had never declared his passion, and she had never been called on to institute an exact enquiry into the state of her heart towards him. But they had been for a whole year very good friends, together; reading the same books, discussing the same subjects, taking the same walks and rides; and, when their eyes met, which was often, seeing each other's opinions and feelings responded to a nicety in every glance. And if, along with all this, it be considered that Rosalie D'Arnell was doomed, under the roof of her sad and melancholy protector, to almost total exclusion from the world; and that Redmond was at once the only young man she saw, and the only cheerer of her solitude, the natural presumption will appear to be that the old and never-ending result must have gradually been taking place between them. When, therefore, it became necessary, in consequence of the shocking disclosures regarding him, that she should give up Redmond's society for ever, Rosalie felt nothing less, however she might try to disguise it to her own breast, than the pangs of disappointed affection; while the circumstances of the case added unusual poignancy to her sufferings.

But the young lady's pride and spirit helped her to wage constant war against her softer impressions. That her high aristocratic blood should ever have throbbed in unison with the degraded stream which, it was now proved, ran through Redmond's veins, was a reflection almost always sufficient to make her ashamed of any gentle sentiments in his regard, and to leave, in her opinion, lofty compassion as her sole present feeling towards him. She had, too, a duty to perform, which assisted her efforts to forget. The Count O'Ruark, her unhappy guardian, required and merited from her all the attentions and all the little cheering tributes of love and gratitude which a heart sincerely feeling both could bestow. The gloom, the bitterness, and the depression which, since they had met, formed his character, now began more than ever to predominate.

His health grew worse, and the weakened and shrinking body allowed full tyranny to the mind. He remained locked up in his chamber oftener and longer than usual, although, for years, solitary habits had been confirmed to him; and his groans, his sighs, and his tears, that ever had a reference to the past, were more frequent to Rosalie's ear, as she stole to his door to listen; or to her eye, upon the few occasions when he would yield to her gentle tap, her entreaties, or her light song, and allow her a moment's opportunity to sit by his side and console him.

After her last meeting with Redmond, Miss D'Arnell had then a double motive in devoting herself to alleviate the sorrows of her protector. During the whole morning and day she repeatedly stole to his door, and by every device tried to induce him to open it and admit her. She described how fine the day was, although a February day; and how deserving of being honoured by a short trip half-way down the avenue, (the extent of the Count's walk, whenever he ventured abroad,) or at least by a saunter in the garden. She brought her guitar, and sitting on a little stool outside the chamber, accompanied herself in all the songs that used to soothe him; but every wile proved vain. At last, with a heavy and sincere sigh, she told him she was ill and unhappy. This soon brought him out; and, faintly smiling on the beautiful girl, her emaciated and feeble guardian led her to the drawing-room.

"Now you must and shall take one little stroll with me, down the avenue," continued Rosalie, as, sitting by his side, every endeavour to amuse him failed. He mournfully shook his head in refusal.

"But there is a particular reason," she continued; "do you remember the last time we took the same walk?"

"It was only yesterday, Rosalie."

"Well; and do you remember the great old dog that, as his ragged master passed the gate, came prowling up the avenue, and showed such a sudden liking for you?"

The Count slightly remembered the dog, but not his attentions, spoken of by Rosalie.

"I saw him, though, first stand to look at you, and then he came limping after us, as we walked back to the house, snuffing and smelling as if he thought he could make you out: just before you stepped into the hall, he did seem to have made up his mind about you, and wagged his spare tail and attempted to jump round you: I feared he might prove troublesome, and so threatened him away with my handkerchief. After we came in, the servants tried to scold him away: he was too aged to be beaten. But now for the point of the story:—he will not go away;—he has made many requests to be admitted at the hall door; and, for all that can be done, is resolved not to retire farther from the house than the spot in the avenue where he and you first met. The poor old brute has slept out there last night, and is sitting shivering in the cold there this moment;—will you come and ask him what he wants, or what he knows about you?"

With a faint interest, the Count inquired the kind of dog he appeared to be. When Rosalie had described him as a large dog, of the Newfoundland species, her companion's interest increased; and, after a moment's pause, he offered Rosalie his arm and walked out with her.

At about the place mentioned by the young lady the animal appeared, indeed, seated; his head and eyes turned to the house. The moment the Count came down the hall steps he stood up, and seemed to exert to the utmost his dimmed eyesight, as if, according to Rosalie, again trying to make him out. They drew close, and he crept, with a lowered neck and tail, smelling all round him. After a little time, the tail began to move; and finally, the old dog, looking up stedfastly into the Count's face, uttered low short barks, and cut some capers, as lively as his great age, and perhaps his remaining doubts, permitted.

"There," said Rosalie; "he knows you quite well."

"It is very strange, Rosalie,—very agitating indeed," answered the Count. "Twenty years ago I had such a dog; but a dreadful circumstance separated us, half the world's distance from Ireland—and how

he has come here, if, indeed, it is the same animal, I cannot, without horrible misgivings, suppose. Down, sir! down!" continued the Count, trembling with excitement, as the dog, growing more convinced, attempted to jump upon him;—"down, Sancho, down!"

At the sound of the name given him, and while the Count's emaciated hand patted his head, the dog seemed to arrive at full certainty, and his yelpings and pranks evinced the excess of his joy. "Sancho, man!" continued the Count, stretching out his hands, while tears started to his eyes, "my poor Sancho, is it you?"

"Wow, wow, wow-ou-ou!" answered Sancho, plunging on the hands that had often fed him, and fondling them, and licking them all over.

"If dogs can weep, he shed tears himself," said Rosalie, while her own trickled fast.

"It is he—my old, old friend, Sancho," resumed the Count, as, overcome by his weak feelings, he knelt on one knee, and bent his head to the delighted old brute, who thereupon greeted his master's face as he had before greeted his hands.

"And what brought you here, Sancho?" continued the Count; where do you live? and who is now your protector in old age?"

Sancho cocked his ears at the inquiring tone of the voice, looked into the speaker's eyes, and then, whether or no he vaguely comprehended the question, or that the action was a result of his own sudden thought, gave an invitating prance and bark; trotted, in a serious business-like way, towards the avenue gate; stopped; looked back; returned; took the Count's skirt in his mouth, and again moved off, conveying as plainly as a sagacious dog can do it, "Come with me, and you shall see."

The count unconsciously advanced in his steps. This was the moment that, in performance of his promise to Redmond, Padhre was on his way to visit Cushneiche in the gaol. He now appeared striding rapidly by, when the scene within attracted him. He stopped short, looked in through the bars of the gate, and whistled. Sancho started at the sound, and ran to him in

new demonstrations of joy. In a few seconds he returned to the Count, and again pulled his skirts, as if proposing an introduction between him and the hermit. The Count drew back in terror. Padhre, rivetting his eyes upon him at about twenty yards distance, also fell back. Sancho ran to him again. He thrust in his arm through the bars, seized the dog by the neck, and in an appalling tone cried—

"In the name of the blessed Trinity, call him by his name!"

"Sancho!" screamed the Count. Padhre replied in a piercing shriek, and disappeared from the gate. The Count tottered and swung round. The weak arms of Rosalie supported him.

"Who is that man?" he gasped out: "have you ever seen him before, Rosalie? what is his name?"

"He is a poor recluse, Sir, called Padhre of the the Castle, from his having inhabited one of the little ruins by the river side, nearly twenty years, they say."

"Twenty years!" repeated the Count, and lay senseless in her arms. Rosalie cried aloud; servants came out; and he was conveyed into the house; Sancho, at Rosalie's desire, being also taken care of.

When he recovered, the Count asked his gentle attendant to get him a draught she would find in his closet. She presented it; he drank it; and from its effects seemed to gain strength and energy. He then required to know if Rosalie could refer him to any one who would be able to give a satisfactory account of Padhre. She knew of no such person or persons, unless it might be the two old men who constantly attended upon him in the Castle, and during his walks. The Count desired to be left alone; and, in about an hour after the scene in the avenue, she saw him, to her great surprise, issue from the house, and, with an earnest step, through the avenue gate.

He continued his way towards the ruins. As he entered among them, the two old men, who on this day had gone out to beg without Padhre, he being too ill to leave the chance of a necessity for their attendance, appeared coming home by another path. Their

figures and dress, and their presence in the lonesome place, convinced the visitor they were the persons he sought, and he at once required at their hands an account of who and what the hermit was.

"An' who is id that axes?" demanded Daddy Clayton, in no better humour than usual;—"an' is this the way we're to be vexed an' bothered, morning, noon, and night, by people we know nothin' of, an' care less about, comin' to bring us to an account in our own place? An' what knowledge duv they want to get iv him that has nothin' to do wid the world, or wid the gentle or simple, or one that brathes the breath o' life in the world, bud is in hands that'll take care iv him to his dyin' day?"

"Saucy old man," said the Count;—but he was immediately interrupted by the clamours of both, returning his language with interest, and screaming out to him to "lave their house an' their place, an' take their heavy curse along wid him." He believed them to be mad, and, as a last resource, flung down a heavy purse, renewing his requests. Daddy Clayton precipitated himself on the largess and crooked it up, but gave no return, contenting himself with still commanding the visitor to retire instantly. His companion, however, moved, perhaps, as well by the Count's appearance, and the great interest he showed in his inquiries, as by his bounty, drew near and whispered—"Ax your questions iv the priest, Father Fenelly: we know no more nor you do; but he knows all—for it's in his hands Padhre is, an' it's he hired us to watch him, mornin,' noon, an' night, afther the time we dhragged him from the river, when he wanted to lie id."

The Count knew where Mr. Fenelly lived, and, acting on this advice, immediately walked towards his house. It was but a short distance from the ruins. About halfway, the person he was speeding to seek approached him. They met in mutual agitation, and fixed their looks on each other.

"I was about to visit you, Sir," began the Count; "I had an inquiry to make, which, I am told, you can

answer—only one question. Do you know a person they call Padhre-na-Moulh?"

"I expected your question, Count. I do know the man. I have known him these twenty years, since his first coming to this country."

"Who is he? what is his real name, Sir?—do you know that?"

"I do;—but, although your agitation seems sufficient for certainty, allow *me* a question which must be solved before your own: what is your reason for these inquiries?"

"I have just seen him—about an hour ago—for the first time, here—and I believe I have seen in *him* a brother—a wretched brother!"

"And when he saw you, at the same time, he was as certain of the connexion; for he came to me and said so; but one other question, if you please: the name *you* bear is no more your real name than that by which he is known? am I right?"

"You are;—my true name is M'Carty."

"Then, Count, you have indeed beheld, after his contrition and sufferings of twenty long years, your unfortunate brother, Collum."

The priest extended his arm to support his friend in the increased agitation this solemn confirmation brought on."

"Wonderful heaven! wretched Collum! praise to the double mercy that would not permit his crime, and yet that wrought upon his heart to repent and offer up a life's atonement for the intention to perpetrate it! and praise, ten thousand praises to the goodness that leaves us both alive so long, that, after his twenty years of misery, I may console his torn heart by a brother's forgiveness! oh, wonderful! and perhaps, good God! perhaps the child too—my boy!—perhaps—"

"He lives, Sir," said the priest; "and Collum is this moment employed in a business that puts him in possession of an estate purchased for him with the treasure honourably amassed by his father."

"My boy, Mr. Fenelly! do you talk of my boy? and am I a father yet?"

"You are, Sir, the happy father of a youth, who, in heart and mind, is an honour to his father; and though, to this hour, Redmond does not know his poor uncle, Collum has known him, and watched him closely, since a few months after the day he brought him here, an infant."

"Redmond, you say? what Redmond? can you mean the lad that, shortly after I settled in Ireland, helped to save my life, and, until a few days back, visited at my house?"

"The same."

"Great Providence! but what mystery is this? I heard a report of the parentage of that youth, which, because I suspected him of attentions to my ward, made it imperative in me to decline his visits: what caused the report? can you say, Mr. Fenelly?"

"Perhaps I cannot tell what first gave rise to it; but of its existence, at present, I believe I can give you some account; not here, however: let us walk towards the old castles. I was proceeding thither to await the return of your brother from the business which now engages him. Come, Sir; I perceive the two old warders I have placed over him issuing forth, in quest of their charge, I suppose; though, were they to meet him now, it is doubtful if they should know him; so we shall be undisturbed by their garrulity. Come, Sir: but you tremble and draw back;—perhaps you do not wish to see Collum this evening."

"I do, Mr. Fenelly, I do; my heart faints with anxiety to see him, as well as to hear all it is necessary I should know: think not I can delay a moment: come; only let me have your arm."

They gained, in twilight, the hermit's castle, and entered and sat down, on two large stones, among the heap of ruins, in the apartment under Peter's cell. Mr. Fenelly resumed:

"To go on, Mr. M'Carty, with the last point upon which I said I would inform you, my story takes this shape The moment Collum recognized you at the avenue gate, he ran to me breathless and trembling, to tell me of the surprising event. I need not acquaint

you that he believed you were dead—dead nearly twenty years: his own life for twenty years gives the assurance. I could not quite depend on his information; for, since we first met, your unhappy brother has shown, in occasional fits of insanity, how deep and corroding was his remorse; and thank God, that enabled him to show it, in any way. But he told me other matters, which, from the strong bearing upon them of his first story, and from the earnestness and clearness with which he pointed out that connexion, in order to obtain my advice as to a certain step he instantly proposed to take, caused me to believe him in his sound senses, and aware of all he uttered. Collum informed me that, from Redmond's own lips, he had, a short time before his meeting with you, received an account of a claim of parentage made upon him by a depraved character, lately well known here, of the name of Cushneiche, who is now in prison; and the youth further gave him to understand that, working upon his terrors of the discovery of Cushneiche's claim, his guardian, Pratt, had got him to assent to the signing of a certain alliance with his, Pratt's, family, this evening. Now, Sir, you must know, that, assured of your death, and not thinking himself bound to proclaim to the world his own dreadful part in the supposed tragedy, your brother had previously made up his mind to encourage Redmond in forming this very alliance; because, as you should further know, Pratt had taken possession of Redmond's estate and house, as his own property; had kept the title-deeds from Collum and from him; and altogether evinced such a mind as made it certain that, if your brother should openly bring him to account, the old lawyer would oblige him to prove his real identity, and so, most probably, discover his crime; and Collum, therefore, sought to promote a marriage between your son and Pratt's daughter, for the purpose of at once insuring to Redmond the independence that was his right, and of hiding from mankind, and from his nephew among the number, that he was a fratricide, and that nephew the son of a man who fell by the hand of his own brother. But, while speaking to me,

awhile ago, under the impression, first, that Pratt had, in the base claim set up by the robber Cushneiche, taken unfair means to compel his ward into the alliance; next, that the youth disliked the match, on account of another liking elsewhere; and next and most importtant of all, that you still lived, and that therefore the necessity for his former concealment of his real name and character no longer existed; speaking, I say, under these impressions, Collum changed his opinion of the expediency of allowing Redmond to form an alliance against his will and hopes of happiness, and, with my approbation, went off to Pratt; reassuming the apparel in which, twenty years ago, he presented himself to the lawyer, after the purchase of the estate, and when he delivered up Redmond to his charge; while I speak, no doubt, they have met; and we may soon expect Collum here, to give us the result of their interview."

"This accounts, Mr. Fenelly, for Pratt's publishing his base rumour; it is clear he did so, and in conjunction with the robber, followed it up, as you say, in order to terrify my son into the marriage. But why so anxious for the measure? why exert himself to ensure a union between his daughter and Redmond? I cannot understand that."

"The time specified by the statute of limitations has not yet quite expired since the date of the purchase of the estate in another name than his own, Sir; and, perhaps, the old pleader thought it good policy to ensure to his daughter, and thereby partially to himself, a property to which he has no real title, and which the reappearance of the true owner (even within the few months that, if expired, would place him in safety,) might wholly take out of his hands. I have no difficulty there. My chief question on this point regards his forming a plot with Cushneiche to effect his purpose. I do not think a prudent person like Pratt would run the risk of committing himself to such a character, particularly when his own assertions to Redmond, and the prevalence of the rumour I am sure he originally circulated, would, with good manage-

ment, have been enough. And, indeed, I believe he never acted in concert with that robber."

"Your reverence spakes rason," said the voice of a man, from the water-course over their heads that led to the hermit's little cell. They looked up, and a figure passed along and disappeared; and then they heard a foot coming down the stairs to a room where they sat. It was Cushneiche himself who spoke:—after emerging out of the gaoler's cabbage-garden, he had bent his steps, in consequence of Redmond's information about the locket, to seek the solitary in his castle; had entered the ruin, before the Count and the priest: explored it in vain for the person he wished to meet; when they came in, secreted himself, in habitual caution, within the recess above; so overheard their conversation: ascertained, to his great astonishment and delight, who one of the speakers was; and, at last, at the proper time, gave the interruption.

In a few seconds the old robber stood before the priest and the Count. The latter started at his appearance.

"The neighbours they calls myself Cushneiche, your reverence," he continued: "an' happenin' to hear a little of what you said, I just stepped down to uphold the last words you spoke."

"If we may believe you, man," said the priest, while his companion looked, in the dim light, closely and anxiously at Cushneiche, "you have come in time, indeed, to give us some explanation of your motive in claiming Redmond Redmond as your son——"

"Juan M'Carty, your reverence manes," interrupted Cushneiche: "I was by when they put the name on him, at the chrishenin'."

The Count again started, and breathed hard.

"An' that chrishenin happened a little while afther my captain, Collum M'Carty, came in his brave ship to take home his brother Felix to Ireland, an' all Felix's threasure along wid him," continued Cushneiche: "an' the child got his name in Felix M'Carty's grand house, near the coast, an' Collum stood godfather. Musha, Sir," suddenly turning to the Count, "do you know who's spakin' to you yet?"

"Mullally!" starting up.

"Keeraun Mullally, amost every inch of him," answered the robber.

"Heavens, Mr. Fenelly! here is new matter for amazement! Generous, though wretched man!" extending his hand; "I have not forgotten the act of mercy you once showed me. But how came you to Ireland? and why do you now stand before me? Oh, Mr. Fenelly, you behold the man who—when, as he says, Collum came to me, across the seas, I knew not from where, for we had been parted for years,—and when, at Collum's instance, I turned all my colonial property into bullion, and embarked it, with my orphan child, in his vessel—you here see the man who, ere we had cleared the Western Islands, was deputed by a wretched brother to row me from the ship, only as far out to sea as might hinder my dying cries from being heard, and there——" The speaker's recollections overpowered him.

"An' there," said Cushneiche, taking up the story, "Yallow Sam an' I broke ordhers, for the first time, an' just rowed about half a league farther, an' left you to a Godsend on the shore of a bit o' land, where the only foes you had to fear, Masther Felix, war the wild bastes, an' the hunger an' starvation; none o' them as bad, howsomdever, as the rage an' revenge of a born brother, an' one that ought to be a Christian man; an' that's not the way we'd part you, sir, if we had any other way to stow you off; an' if Captain Collum wasn't waitin' for us on the deck, in the blackness o' the blackest night ever fell from the heavens, to get an account of how we done his biddin', an' if we didn't fear to lose our own lives for savin' o' your's. An' now about one o' the questions you axed me. I'm standin' afore you in this ould place to-night, becase I cum into it on the like arrand wid yourself an' his reverence, maybe, to thry if Padhre-na-Moulh isn't the same Collum that, for near twenty years, none iv us could hear of, it seems: an' you'll ax me what put the thought into my head, an' here's the rason. Do you remember, Masther Felix, that before we left you on

the wild island, Yallow Sam tuck off o' your neck a little keepsake, with letthers on it, an' a goold chain hangin' from it, tellin' you it was the proof that Collum bid us bring back of the doin' o' the ordhers he sent us out to do?"

"Yes, a locket, holding at one side a tress of my dear wife's hair, and at the other, the initials of her maiden name? I remember it well."

"An' so do I; an' so I did this mornin', when I saw it round the neck o' your son, who tould me he got it in this ould castle. So, there's what brought me here; to see the man that gave it to him, or that had it in his hands afore he got it. An' it's wid a good will I'll spake in answer to your other questions, too, an' all they want me to tell, when your honour just let's me ax a word o' my own. Sam and I gave the keepsake to Captain Collum, tellin' him his brother was swimmin' undher as many fathom o' wather as the sey could rowl over him,—an' the good ship brought us all to England. In some time, for a rason you're to hear, I was forced to run that same ship across the seys, agin, widout any one to command her but myself; an' comin' near the place where Sam an' I left you, we touched, and went ashore to see if you war alive or dead. A good while we thramped through the bit of an island, over an' hither, but saw no livin' crature, or a dead one either, till, walkin' back to the coast, we found the remains of a man, that the wild bastes, we thought, had dhragged into a hollow in the rocks, an' left there, afther a hearty male. There was no face or fatures, an' the very clothes war tore away; an' we said to one another that, there you lay, or the little o' you that was left, any how; an' from that day out we gave up all thought of ever seein' much more o' you, either, savin' your presence, Masther Felix."

"Alas, the poor remains should have been mine rather than those of a benefactor who met a shocking fate while assisting to rescue me. Some days after you abandoned me, a sail came in view; I raised a signal; she approached me, and sent a boat. It was a French vessel. The boat's crew were numerous; one of them

strayed away from his companions, after landing; before we could embark, tigers were heard in the jungle; the poor man had not been missed; or was now forgotten or unheeded; all crowded into the boat; we had not gained the ship when he appeared running towards the shore, and then we witnessed his dreadful death.

"I will continue to acquaint you with my fortunes, afterwards, which you must be anxious to know. The unnatural and abominable crime of a brother could not be divulged. Even my own feelings were spared in suppressing it. I therefore represented myself to the captain of the vessel as a merchant who had been left on the island by the mutinous crew of a ship in which I had taken my passage to Europe. I could truly add, that great wealth had been plundered from me, and that, after more than twenty years of toil and industry, I now found myself pennyless. Suppressing my name, too, with the view of for ever hiding it from mankind, and particularly from my terrible brother,—with the view, indeed, of disclaiming a name, that, in the person of that brother, had been so immeasurably disgraced, I adopted the first Irish one I recollected—the same I now bear—O'Ruark. A wealthy and noble Frenchman on board, who had been married to an Irish lady, became interested for me, as well on account of my country, as of my misfortunes. He offered to assist me when we should arrive in Europe. With little hope or care about the future, I accepted his offer. He kept his word. Under his auspices, and, indeed, his efforts, rather than mine, for the spring of my own energy was broken—life had no longer an interest for me —I again arrived at wealth. He was a widower, like myself, with an only daughter; and the single solace of my darkened and most miserable existence was to assist the growth of that sweet girl's mind; I loved her as a child, and even before the death of her father, she repaid me almost with a child's affection: he died; upon his death-bed Rosalie D'Arnell's hand was placed in mine by my excellent friend, and I promised to be a father to her indeed: I could not entertain a hope that my own boy, lived; whatever was the horrible motive

to destroy me, must, I thought, have also compassed his destruction: and the little power left to me of loving any thing human became roused towards poor Rosalie. Alas, the uniform melancholy of my life, increased after the decease of my friend, and by the approach of old age, has allowed her but little happiness under my protection. A few words more conclude my story. Count D'Arnell's death made a residence in France irksome to us both; added to this, the yearning that even wretches feel to lay their bones in their native land, faintly stirred in my bosom; I met in Paris an Irish gentleman who wished to dispose of the house and small estate I now occupy; we came to terms; and the result was, that the hand of Providence conducted me to the spot where a late happiness and blessing were in store for me."

"We hard your honour say, just now," observed Cushneiche, "that you never guessed the rason o' Captain Collum's doin's, in your regard; or somethin' o' the kind. First an' foremost, on the head o' that, do you know, yet, what kind of a ship he came to see you in, an' what kind o' hands sailed undher him?"

"Collum told me that some years after I left Ireland —where, indeed, we parted in unkindness."

"Yes, Sir; he thought you had no right to keep all the little fort'n your father left between ye."

"I did not keep it all, though I knew he hated me for saving out of his imprudent hands a small portion of the bequest that was exclusively mine;—no, I was not a selfish brother; he had means from me to support years of idle and disreputable squandering; and I ceased to supply him, only when I became assured that to do so, was but to encourage him in a ruinous career, and at the same time ruin myself; and when my remonstrances, as an elder brother, were not only neglected, but met with ungrateful, and, I may say, savage hostility."

"Well, Sir; but there was another little rason why Collum didn't love nor like a bone in your skin. You married the girl that, afore you an' she cum together, he was dyin' for."

"Is that possible?" starting in unfeigned surprise; "I never suspected he could dislike me for such a reason, because I never knew before this moment that such a one existed. My wife—before she was my wife,—could not have been aware of his feelings?"

"I blieve not, Sir; an' it was fresh fuel to the fire in Black Collum's breast, within, that, when he put himself in her way, the colleen's eye never tould that she liked to see him afore her. He was too proud to beg the love from her; but her couldness was enough to gnaw his heart for ever, an' to make him hate, in the bottom o' the heart, the man that won more favour than he could,—though that man was own mother's son to him. An' now, what did he tell you, when he came to see you, Sir?"

"He told me that, as I said, a few years after I left Ireland, he went to seek his fortune in Spain; there met a countryman whose mercantile pursuits had produced him much wealth; entered the house of this person as an assistant; became a partner, married his daughter, was at last trading to the colonies on his own account, and so had come, owner and captain together, of the fine vessel you speak of."

"Now listen to the thrue story. Afther ye parted in Ireland, he went to sey, an' worked for years afore the mast; deserted from his ship; fell in, among the American Islands, with some o' the last o' the bould 'brethern o' the coast'; found their life more to his hand an' his likin' than any other; got promotion an' command among 'em,—for out o' six ships' crews even of such born divils as they war, few had the hand an' heart to do, an' fewer the head to plan, like Collum—barrin' in the ould times, lads like ould Van-Horn, Sawkins, and Morgan the Taffy, that I hard tell of: an' so, Sir, it was in a good ship, borrowed from the king o' Spain himself, by two simple boat-fulls o' such boys as we're spakin' of, wid Black Collum at their head, an' my own poor bones among 'em, that your brother cum to visit you; an' it was afther ten years of a life spent on the wild seys in such company, he cum; an' it was from the doin' o' things that harden

the heart o' man, in cruelty, as well as courage an' bouldness, he cum; things that good christhins wouldn't believe, an' that the wide an' silent ocean war the fittest witness of;—this was the brother you met at last, afther a partin' o' twenty years, an' all his ould grudges fresh in his heart agin you; this was the man you thrusted yourself, an' your boy, an' your threasure to; the man that I often seen head an open boat to attack a mounted two decker, as sure of the battle as if he war the hell-fire divil in arnest, that his enemies tuck him for; the man that I often seen spring up into the mouths of ten roarin' cannon, the blazes, that couldn't kill him, scorchin' him, an' twenty hangers an' dirks hid for him in the cloud o' smoke he jumped, screechin', into; the man that never yet put his foot on a deck he didn't masther; an' the man, too, that never stood five minutes on the deck he masthered, without clearin' it from stim to sterun, from the mast-head to the hould, of every sowl that riz a hand or spoke a breath agin his right an' title.

"An' maybe, I can gi' your honour one or two rasons more why Black Collum let the duoul tempt him, that night you remember so well. The first year you went across the sey, do you bring to mind a brown Spanish girl, that had no objections to your makin' your own of her?—You do; well aroon. She an' Collum met afther; an', keepin' her mind to herself,—only that of an odd time, I pumped it out of her,—she let him take her by the hand; they war togither when he touched on the coast: she knew you, an' was at his elbow in the ship when you cum aboord, an' for the sake o' the threasure you had, as she purtended, it was her voice that first turned his thought to ruin you. Maybe he didn't mind her word about the threasure, but that his own ould hathred only wanted the wind of any word to blow it into a blaze. Maybe he did mind it: for we war just afther losin', by rason of our partner runnin' aground out of our company, the plundher of three good galloons; an' it can't be hid that love an' likin' for the goold an' the silver was always the freshest breeze that filled our canvas;—an', may be, more

than all, the wine an' the brandy, that ever made him a horned divil, entirely, fixed the thought in his head an' heart, that rearin' night.

"It's a thruth that the next mornin', Black Collum looked blacker than ever, an' we could all see it was a new darkness that cum upon him: but Yallow Sam an' I knew, above the rest, the raal manin' of it. We knew that the little conscience he had left, made hell's torments in his sowl within. An' a greater mark of his mind was in the way he began to grow fond o' the child of his brother: an' it warn't long until I gained the knowledge of how it all worked him.

"He called me below, one night, an' tould me it was in his thought to give up a sey life, an' wid his brother's threasure, an' some of his own, buy a bit o' land in ould Ireland; an' that he'd bring young Juan to live on it wid him, and lave it all to the boy on his death-bed. He axed me to stand by him in the schame, an' I promised. We landed in England, afther partin' a'most all our hands, an' came bouldly into the mouth o' the comely river that runs into the sey from Lunnon. He an' I went up to the town, lavin' the ship in care o' Yallow Sam. There he saw an offer made in the newspaper to sell such an estate as he wanted, an' Pratt's name as the person to bargain wid for it. He wrote to Pratt, undher the name of Redmond Velasquez, an' got letthers in return. I saw them all; for I was his adviser in every thing. We had some delay in turnin' the whole of our threasure into money, afther the land was bought; that was the rason he couldn't go over to Ireland in speed; an' at last, when he did go, bringin' the boy wid him, an' the women I tould you of, to take care of the boy, it was afore the same business was settled; so that he left me in Lunnon wid word to wait till he cum back, when we could get all our money together, sellin' the ship, at the same time, and then we war to go to Ireland for life.

"Now comes on some o' the story ye like to hear best. About a week afther Collum left me, I got a letther from him, givin' an account of all he said an' done wid Pratt, an' how the title-deeds war not ready, but

that the attorney gave him an' ownin' of 'em; an' the way he put the child into his hands; an', to make long short, the letther tould me all that ye 'll soon hear I tould your son, Sir, a few days back, to make him think I was his father; an' that I knew Pratt couldn't and wouldn't gainsay, undher the fear of two loaded pistols, in his hearin'. An' this letther was sent to me to bid me do some things to be ready for Collum's return to Lunnon, that we might have the less delay in goin' back together, to Ireland; an' the ship he sailed in was wind-bound at the time, in an Irish port. Well, I did what he bid me, an' waited for his comin'. But he didn't come. A month wore away, an' I hard nothin' o' my captain; an' my mind grew uneasy by rason of whisperins an' cullodgin' about our ship an' us, that Yallow Sam tould me sthrayed to his ears. At last, I got another letther that a'most broke my heart. It was a letther to take a long lave o' me. Collum wrote word that we war to be parted for ever an' a day; that I could never hear more of him; that he was lost to me an' to the wide world, along wid me; that I might sell the ship, or keep it, an' take up the money too, owin' to us in Lunnon, an' be my own masther; only he prached to me, like any soggarth or parson, to turn into some good coorse, an' end my life well, an' betther than he could, now. What was I to think from this, but that the law had clapt hands on him, when he laste expected it, an' that it was his last speech he sent me? Divil another thing, I b'lieved, (an' Yallow Sam was o' the same mind wid me,) could turn the captain into a sarment-maker, for all that was past an' gone—the throubles o' conscience, themselves, for what he thought he done to his born brother, didn't give us a rason: sure if we had a notion that he was so sorry for it entirely, an' 'ud like to be undeceaved on the head of it, an' not take our own lives for disobeyin' his ordhers, it's long afore we'd tell him the thruth o' the business; so, cock-sure he was a gone-man, Sam an' I began to be afeard on our own account; an' the whispers I tould of, growin' more suspicious every day, faith, we just slipt into the good ship one mornin', an'

made for the ould point, to begin the world in the ould way, on our own bottoms. That was the time we touched to look for you, Sir, on the bit of a wild island.

"But loock an' grace left us wid our captain. In a little while, the ship went to pieces on a rock; Sam an' I, out of all the hands, war picked up by an Englishman, an' landed on English ground, once-again. Some little thrade like our own, only in the land-sarvice, was goin' on, that time, upon the high-roads o' the place, an' afore we'd go over to Ireland to see what Pratt done wid the child—for that scheme was always in our mind, afther the first fright o' runnin' away in our own poor ship—sure we thought, as we wanted thravellin' charges, we might as well turn our hand to industhry. But, bad loock to the land, an' glory to the sey—axin' your reverance's pardon—there was no such fightin' room, or sailin' room, as we war used to; an' we made a bad business of it, an' war soon captured an' put up. The turn of a sthraw saved our necks, an' they sent us to Botany; an', as I tould the boy yesterday evenin' (only changin' a little thing or two, to sarve a purpose)—we had such good lookin' afther there, that, wid all our knowledge, we couldn't slip a cable on 'em for near twenty long years, until at last a good chance stood our friend, an' away we worked our passage to Ireland, still bent on seein' whether or no the ould attorney done his duty by our captain's brother's son.

"I remembered Collum's first letther to me, an' we soon made out the ground we wanted. We couldn't dhrame of callin' Pratt to account, his own self, or in an open way, in regard he might by that manes find out what kind of a customer he had in Collum for the estate, an' so the boy might be ruined entirely; an' maybe, for another rason; we landed in the poor ould counthry as bare as Job, an' our mouths war to be filled, an' our backs covered; an' so, afore we got near Pratt's part o' the counthry, a thrick or two o' the ould thrade sarved our turn; an' it was likely the lawerman 'ud soon smell us out, an' that the welcome he'd

give us 'ud be none o' the kindest, an' not one that 'ud speed our business either. But to see the boy himself was our schame; an' if Pratt didn't thrate him well, to tell him who an' what he was, an' his right to the estate, an' every thing else we ought to tell him. Redmond, as they called him, wasn't at home, howsomdever; an' we had to wait a long while till he cum from Dublin; an' then, to tell God's thruth, we war forced to make more cruizes about the place, wid help from recruits on the spot, that put us in more danger than ever from Pratt an' his sort, an' gave more rason why we war behouldin' to take care who we opened our mind to.

"At last I come across the boy, on the hill near the house; an' at last I'm to tell ye why I put the quare story on him ye know about, instead o' the thrue one I thravelled so far to tell him. First, I didn't know him from Adam, when we met, until he wanted me to take, along wid a brave handful o' goold an' silver, a little meddle, like that I remembered, even in the light of a bad moon, was hung round his neck, at the chrishenin' of him, by his uncle an' his godfather, an' that I often seen afore—an' maybe the way it came into Collum's hands, too. Well, when I saw it was the boy I wanted, I saw, at that same time, he was in some fit o' passion or other, as high as the highest wind the duoul ever blew, an' not the laste fit to hear sense an' rason, or take the right coorse afther hearin' a story that concarned him nearly; more-betoken, however it happened—an' I know, now, though I couldn't guess, then—his flurry seemed to be on the head of the very business I wanted to talk to him about; an', to mend the matther, the moment I just threw out a word o' soundins, like, that I could help him to a knowledge o' the father of him,—an' this was afore I guessed he was ravin' on the self-same question—the gorçoon opened on me in such a way, an' threatened me so hard, in regard o' what he'd do to me an' to the wide world if I didn't show him his father was safe, or tell him who kilt him or hurt him, supposin' him not to be safe, that, faith, genteels, as we war alone on that wild

hill, an' as he an' I had a little tussle at the first goin' off, an' I nothing the betther o' the same, it cum into my head not to tell him at that prasant minute the whole o' the right story. But as he bawled at me to tell him somethin' or other, an' as a sthrife betwixt us 'ud lade to no good, any how, whichever was up or down, why, afther takin' a start o' thought on the whole matther, here's what I said, an' why I said it.

"'You're my own child, Redmond,' says I, becase, genteels, if I tould him who the raal father was, an' what happened him at the hands of his own brother, an' our lavin' him on the island, instead o' throwin' him, neck an' heels, out o' the boat, d'ye think the angry boy 'ud be satisfied wid my account? or b'lieve we hadn't kilt him instead o' savin' him?—or wait to pondher it one way or the other, only either fly at me, to take my life that minute, or else dhrag me off to a gaol, an' so put himself as well as me into Pratt's clutches? —But it cum across my mind, that if I could persuade him he was the son of an ould free-boother, (though I say the word that shouldn't say it) tellin' him, at the same time, all the rest o' the business, just as Collum's first letther tould me, only puttin' myself in Collum's place, an' gettin' Pratt to prove my words afther,—it cum across me that this 'ud cool the boy, an' bring him to his rason; the shame o' such a father as I was, God help me! 'ud make him hould his tongue, an' take a close part, an' lave me to see him righted, in a way o' my own; an' then when all was clane over, my last thought was to dhraw off out o' harum's way, from him, an' Pratt, an' the whole kit o' ye, an' write a letther, as well as I remembered how, that 'ud clear up the only point I darkened him on, an' give the name an' the karācthur of the thrue Redmond Velasquez, an', by coorse, the thrue man that once owned him. An' so, there's the manin' o' the part I tuck, an' there's all my little schames for ye, from bigginnin' to endin', as bright as they cum into Keeraun Mullally's head, an' as he done 'em, or as he meant to do 'em, any how."

CHAPTER XII.

"It was of a dreary night in December, I first met your brother Collum, Sir," said the priest, after the old pirate had done speaking, and when Mr. Felix M'Carty, as we are now obliged to call him, had put some questions to Mr. Fenelly;—"of a Saturday-night, too; I remember it well; one of the last upon which my poor people crowd into the little chapel to prepare for their Christmas duty. Ere I entered the confessional, I had observed a very remarkable man sauntering, or rather dodging about the chapel-yard that was before the chapel-door. He wore a sailor's dress; one marking a degree above the common sailor, for aught I know; but his air, his face, his step, and the whole bearing of his tall, straight figure suggested, at all events, the idea of a superior person. Something wondering to see a stranger of his kind in such a place, and also recollecting that on one or two occasions before I had noticed him, at a distance, in the lonesome walks about the village, I passed into the chapel, sat down in my confession-box, and began the duties of the evening. A great number, as is usual on the approach of Christmas and Easter, were waiting to be heard, as we call it, in their turns; and I could not change fast enough in my box for them, and open the slide of the little round orifice at either side, to listen alternately to the varied avowals of human frailty that craved my advice, my control, and finally, through my mouth, a conditional promise of pardon from my God. An hour might have been thus spent, when chancing to look out through the slit in the curtain of my box, I recognized the tall and almost sublime figure of the stranger, leaning against one of the little rude props that supported the thatched roof of my humble chapel. From another prop, the weak light of a tin sconce, or lamp, fell upon his features, and allowed me to see their expression; and I thought I read upon his cloudy brow, and his rolling eye, and in his half-open and contorted mouth, the sto-

ry of a bosom blackened with crime, torn with remorse, and just beginning to work in the terrible labour of a first repentance. I could perceive that he eyed askance the humble crowds that, in the dreary twilight, knelt around him where he stood; and, now and then, that his agitated glance followed those who came, some moving on their knees, to confess their burden of sin; and those who, their ordeal over, returned from the confessional to the railing of the sanctuary, to throw themselves, there, in aspirations of thanks to God, and of promises of future virtue. Having remarked him, for some time, I proceeded in my duty. About another hour elapsed before I thought I could properly spare time to pay him more attention; and a sweet little child of thirteen or fourteen, who went from me with permission to approach her first communion, had, accompanied by her father, also a penitent of the evening, gone to the sanctuary to complete their devotions; when I was alarmed by a sudden noise and outcry, that spread among all the people of the chapel, and hastily stepping out of my box, I found the poor stranger just after flinging himself prostrate by the side of the child, while his frame shook, groans and sobs broke from his manly breast, and the glorious tears of a true repentance ran down the backs of the hands with which he covered his face. Not unaffected, myself, I raised him and held him in my arms, and whispered the words of sublime consolation my merciful and Almighty Master had commanded me to drop as so many drops of oil upon the torn heart of the remorseful sinner. My words seemed to overwhelm him with greater agony. He would have again fallen at my feet. I resisted his attempt. We retired from the wondering and sympathizing crowd, into the little sacristy at the back of the altar. That night—that moment, Collum M'Carthy first sued for peace with his God; but if there is more to be told, he must be the speaker."

"There is more to be told, and he will be the speaker," repeated a low and broken voice; and all looking up, saw the figure Redmond had just seen in his guardian's house, filling the blank of the square

door-way of the room they occupied, and swaying, to and fro, as if, from physical weakness, or agitation, or both, the limbs refused their usual office.

"Collum, Collum! brother, brother!"—exclaimed Felix M'Carthy, in a voice almost as broken and feeble; he rose up as he spoke, and took a step towards the door; the wretched Collum, with a faint groan, stumbled over the stone threshold, and lay on the floor, at his brother's feet, prostrate, senseless, and bleeding in the temple from the violence of his heavy fall. They raised him, and bore him down stairs to the nearest of the squalid couches usually occupied by one of his old attendants. When he partially recovered, and found his hand in that of his brother, he uttered mournful cries, snatched the hand away, and again laid his head at Felix's feet.

"Oh, Collum, my brother, my poor brother!" resumed Felix, "why do you refuse my hand?"

"You cannot, you never can say, 'forgive'!" murmured the unhappy man, as his face was hid on the floor.

"I can, Collum; brother, I can; I have said the word; I say it now; and let you only say another word: say but that you can love me at last, and for the time to come, and we may yet be happy brothers together."

Collum slowly raised himself, looked gradually but steadfastly into the features of the speaker, then, clasping his hands, addressed himself in joyful murmurs to Heaven, and finally embraced his brother's knees, while that brother put his arms round his body, and inclined a cheek to his.

"The peace and pardon of the God of peace be with you, and dwell with you, my children," said the clergyman, kneeling. The old pirate, tears stealing down his iron cheeks, knelt also, and added an "amen," not unacceptable, perhaps, even after his life of sin, in his present situation, and with his sincere feelings.

"The moment I left the child with Pratt, in the carriage," said Collum, as soon as he had gained the power of speaking, and ascertained from the words of those around him to what extent they wished him to

speak: "I walked, with my bad companion, to the ship, that, at only a short distance from the little sea-coast village, awaited to bear us back to England. Oh, let me humbly, but earnestly request you to believe that even then, although my evil nature had not permitted a thorough change, true sorrow and remorse weighed me down for the unnamable crime of which I thought myself guilty; and guilty I was and am: although a merciful Providence would not permit the murder, I was guilty to the full extent of intention. The sea was not calm when we embarked; but I thought it smooth as glass, and I panted for the roaring and lashing waves that would lift our little vessel into the clouds, and dash it back again into the valleys of ocean, and scourge and buffet us, as did the tumbling passions which assailed my obdurate heart. I had my wish; the storm came; and came for an end at once more terrible and merciful than I had contemplated. During one dark day and darker night, we were driven from point to point around the shore of Ireland; until at last, upon some wild and almost desert part of the western coast, in the province of Connaught, I believe, our buffeted ship struck to pieces. It was near morning. I awoke to sense, lying among a pile of rocks, the partner of many of my crimes stretched by my side, while one of my arms grasped her hair. It seems I had rescued her; though I did not and do not remember the circumstances. She recovered, too, pouring forth curses the moment she had breath to give them utterance. She was mad: terror, and buffetings against the rocks, with their results, had bewildered her; her leg and arm, and some of her ribs were shattered, and she suffered great pain. She cursed me as her destroyer, and a hundred times called on Heaven to shower down vengeance on my head, and hell to open at our feet and receive us together. She denounced me as the murderer of my brother, whom, by her ravings I now discovered, she had once fiercely loved; and called on me to prepare for the eternal miseries that crime kept in store for me. Growing worse, she conjured up his spirit, and her hoarse screams, mixed with

the hoarse roaring of the sea, and the rolling of her maniac eyes as she pointed him out among the grey rocks, or spoke to him to ensure maledictions to me, were horrible—in my bodily weakness and mental acknowledgments of all she said, they made me almost as mad as she was. Now and then she would furiously call on me to bring her water to cool her burning lips, and food for the hunger she only thought she felt; but I could not move from her side; my own thigh was sorely bruised, and I was unable to walk a step; and when her demands were not fulfilled, the frantic wretch repeated her terrible blasphemies, until the marrow froze in my bones. Once, as the sunless day was nearly spent, she turned suddenly on her side, as we lay stretched together, glared in my eyes, snatched my arm, and attempted to put it to her teeth. About half way in the night after our wreck, she died, clinging close to me, and calling me with her to the place of torments she anticipated for herself.

"I lay by her, until, in the darkness of that infernal night, the spirit of madness she had just breathed out, entered into me, and I was at last indeed as mad, and more accurst in my madness than the wretch I had survived. The crimes of which she but spoke, I felt; and all her terrors and fancies came tenfold more vividly to my diseased eye. The shade she had imagined was soon presented to me too; and the hell she raved of I also called up around me; the booming of the sea turned into the roar of its flames. Towards morning I sank down, again senseless.

"I was aroused by two fishermen, who lifted me up. Reason came back, but remorse was confirmed. They buried the body in the sand; and then helped me to crawl towards their distant and humble cabin. On our way they found a strongly clasped trunk, with a spring lid, which I knew to be mine; they gave it into my possession without a word. Under their roof I recovered from the contusion on my thigh, and gained strength to walk about and think. My mind took a vague resolve to go back to the village, in the neighbourhood of which I had left my brother's child, and

there retire from the world, perhaps without discovering myself, or without claiming the estate I had purchased, and spend my life in watching him. I had firmly determined never to seek out my old mates in England. In fact, conscience was weighing me to the earth, and already sapping the strength of my fierce heart, although I was not yet humbled into a true, full, and, as it ought to be, overwhelming view of the crime I had perpetrated.

"I purchased a sailor's dress out of the contents of my trunk; stuffed into the trunk my half Spanish dress, and brought it with me, by a secret conveyance, to the village spoken of. Avoiding the little inn where I had first met the agent, I took up my abode in one of even less consideration, on the outskirts of the village. It was of a Sunday evening that I reached the secluded place. Its humble people, men, women, and children, were walking about gaily, or laughing in groups at their doors. Peace and simplicity spread around me, and the contrast of my bosom grew blacker. I heard the chime of a little bell, and many of the villagers, young and old, hastened off to some particular point. Following them, I came to a lowly, thatched building, which, from the rude cross at one end, I recognized to be a Roman Catholic chapel, removed but a short distance from the Protestant church, that was formed out of part of the ruins of an old abbey, and both having a common burying-ground. The simple crowds entered the chapel; I lurked in the churchyard; and presently rose the vesper-chaunt, that in my boyish days was so familiar to my ears, and often to my tongue: I thrilled from head to foot; my pulses beat achingly; my throat was pained; I felt all the symptoms of coming tears; but they were too darkly pent up to flow yet. That was the first moment, however, in which the first thought of religious satisfaction for my sin glanced across my mind.

"I returned to my lodging-house, and heard the landlady and some of her gossips speak about the great fortune that was newly come into Lawyer Pratt's hands, and of the supposed nephew he had sent to

nurse at a neighbour's cabin. Next day, ascertaining the situation of the nurse's house, I walked out, and strolled about it. In some time a young married woman, carrying a child in her arms, crossed my path. From her prattle to the unconscious infant, I learned it was my brother's son. Stopping her, to ask a word about my native village, I took an opportunity to approach the child. It stretched out its little arms to me. I shrunk from it in horror, and walked rapidly away. The parish priest just then appeared in view, riding along the road from his house, to administer spiritual comfort to some relative of a poor man, who, weeping profusely, ran on at his side. An impulse seized me to wait till he should be coming back, and fling myself at his feet. For this purpose I sauntered about the road; the priest re-appeared; I could not keep my resolution.

"For a week I thus continued in a lethargy, if so it may be called, which, leaving me alive to all the tortures of my situation, would not permit an effort for relief. Every day I stole out to the cabin where the child was at nurse, and waited for hours to catch a sight of it. At last came the Saturday night Mr. Fenelly has already spoken of. Without any summons from the chapel-bell, I saw the people going off, one by one, to the chapel. I recollected on what business. I recollected it was to prepare themselves for meeting, with clean breasts, the anniversary of the day upon which the Saviour appeared among men, to shed his blood for the blackest sinner. I walked quickly in the footsteps of the villagers: but, arrived at the chapel-door, could not enter. As I hesitated, the priest came towards the door; I saw his eye watching me, and I slunk back in terror. In some time a father came up, leading by the hand a beautiful girl. Ere they went into the chapel, he stooped down and kissed her cheek. I followed *them*.

"I had been in great churches in great cities; I had heard the organ's peal echoing through the arched intricacies of fretted roofs and branching aisles and cloisters; I had seen homage done to God amid the blaze

of a hundred lights, the fume of incense, and the pomp of ceremony; but never did I feel the influence of religion so powerfully as in the dusk and the silence of this lowly, thatched chapel, and among the humble village crowds that knelt around me. There were no spectators here; none come to look on, and go away unprofitably; all were actors,—and all were in earnest. I leaned against a wooden prop, and looked stealthily around me. The pain came again into my throat, and my breast swelled and swelled as if it would have burst. My eye sought the father and his innocent and beauteous child. They had placed themselves at different sides of the confession box. The father first knelt up and waited for his daughter. When she had ended her confession, they walked hand in hand to the rails, passing closely by me. He smiled; and as she looked up into his face, smiling too, tears swam in her truly angelic eyes. Before this I had been much moved; now I was subdued. I tottered to the sanctuary, and there, falling by the girl's side, "Oh God!" I cried, "let guilt sue for pardon in the company of innocence!"—The priest came to me, and we were soon alone.

"Twenty years, or my future life, if I should not live so long, was the term of the penance laid upon me. No matter what were the conditions of that penance, I did not deem them enough to expiate the deed I thought I had committed, and I added, by vow, others, which, through weakness and wandering of mind, I have since observed. Twenty years of loneliness and silence among men, while the bread of my existence was to be begged at the doors of the charitable. The product of the wealth, partly for which I had steeped my hands in a brother's blood, I for ever renounced. The usual comforts of lodging and lying down, the show of dress, any thing by which a mark of equality with my fellows could be retained, was interdicted. I joyfully took up any burden of atonement; joyfully, because, with the terrible reprehensions that impressed on me a full sense of my guilt, the sweet, sweet whispers of conditional pardon and mercy stole into my heart. Twenty years—a life, even if life could

last thrice twenty years, was now nothing to me but the interval between crime and its pardon—between misery and peace!

"Perhaps the excess of my feelings urged me to overstrain the terms according to which I could hope to be forgiven; perhaps reason, then and afterwards, wavered in the combat of hopes and fears, of recollections and terrors, within me. That very night I left the village, and walked to this ruin which has since been my residence. Carrying with me the trunk that contained the dress in which you now see me, and the remaining money of which I stood possessed, I rooted a hole in the wall of the cell over head, and buried it from my sight or touch for ever. My sailor's clothes were worn until they fell in rags from my back, and then other rags supplied them. While in the fisherman's hut, near where I had been shipwrecked, and before my mind finally revolted at the idea of rejoining my former comrades, I had written a letter to the man I see here at my side, giving him an account of my interview with Pratt, and my disposal of the child: now, in accordance also with a promise made, I again wrote to him, taking a farewell, and admonishing him to turn from evil. My days, and the greater part of my nights, were spent in lowly prayers, or in contemplating the enormity of my crime, so that my soul might be moved to greater sorrow, or any occasional impatience of my lot absorbed in a sense of duty. But I was not always successful in obtaining the quiet that prayer should confer. Perhaps, too, human nature sometimes grew stronger than my resolves; or madness itself may have come to raise terrible battles in my brain and heart. It is certain that, in my most bitter solitude, I was not left untempted. Self-destruction crossed my thoughts more than once; and upon a night, five years after my seclusion, I rushed, screaming, to the river side, and plunged in. But Heaven again was merciful. Two old creatures, wanderers like myself, dragged me from the water; and constant visits from my adviser, their watchfulness, and, in a degree, their society, commanded and permitted by him, saved me till this hour.

"The question of the claim and birth of my brother's child did not fail to interest my most excellent counsellor. It was decided that, having sincerely entered into an atonement for my crime, I had no right to expose it to the world; and if the boy could have his own without any avowal that might incur this chance, I was not to interfere. Time was therefore taken to watch Pratt's intentions. Notwithstanding the rumour of his possessing the estate in his own right, they seemed favourable. In a few years he married, and had a daughter, and people said he destined his ward to make her his wife. One evening I met the boy in his nurse's arms, in company with Pratt and his lady, and their own infant, and as I passed them unnoticed, certain expressions used by them made me assured that the common report was well founded. The education he gave my nephew, as years rolled on, left no doubt. It was with great sorrow, therefore, that a short time ago, I discovered Redmond's, or more properly, Juan's, disinclination to the proposed match. Wishing to give him a direction which would be for his own good, I often urged him to a union with his young and amiable friend; but in vain; his heart was bestowed on Rosalie D'Arnell. The occurrences of this day and night may show, however, that every thing has happened for the best.

"I grow weak: I have been very ill for some days past; the effort I made to visit Pratt was forced; and now the sickness returns: I am, indeed, very feeble ——" he sunk on the couch upon which he had hitherto been sitting; his brother and the priest sprang to support him. "It will be useless," he continued, "I have had the sense of coming death on me before this; and now——My lips and throat are parched; let any good Christian here go up to my little cell, and bring a drop of water to me for the love of God; it is in a little box——"

Cushneiche, saying he knew very well where it was, ran up the stairs. "Yes," continued Collum; "and now, though I dare not and do not ask to have life shortened one hour, if I have not erred in my hopes, a blessed relief is at hand."

"Collum," said Felix, "do not speak those words; your trials are over: you stand forgiven upon earth and in Heaven: the future upon earth should be happy; and it shall, if a brother's care and love can make it so; cheer up; if you have strength to walk to my house——"

"No, Felix," interrupted the wretch, "that can never be; your forgiveness—your being alive to forgive me—is the greatest blessing; your fellowship I cannot, dare not court, even was there a promise of life to seek it. Oh, my soul shrinks at the thought! How could I sit by your fire-side? How look into your face? No, my brother, no!—give your hand again; I ask that; and now one drop of water; one drop for His sake who ——." He was again silent: Cushneiche appeared with the bottle; as Felix stooped to put it to his mouth, he shuddered to touch his face,—a deathy perspiration spread over it.

"Collum," he resumed, "you must leave this place; I will send my servants to bear you out of it; farewell but for a moment."

"Stay," said Collum, faintly; "if the priest is here —was he not here? My brain swims, my eyes fail—but I think he was;—let him lay his hands on my head—and though I cannot kneel, let him say the last words of pardon; and you, too, my brother, you——" His utterance quite failed. Mr. Fenelly hastily proceeded to discharge the duty demanded of him. Collum recovered a little, and as the clergyman had the sacrament with him, it was administered. All knelt in prayer: the tears and sobs of Felix only interrupting the solemn scene. At last there was a pause.

"Does he live yet?" asked Felix of the priest.

"He does—and perhaps life is not in such great danger. Let us all exert ourselves for assistance. I will go home for some medicines of my own. This man can hasten to the village for the physician—and you, Sir, to your house, to summon your servants:—quick—do not hesitate to leave him here.—Listen to the persons that now enter the castle—they will watch him as well or better than we can—come, Sir, come."

Felix, the priest, and Cushneiche, left the apartment upon the separate errands Mr. Fenelly had specified. On the stairs they met the two old men, come back from a fruitless search after Collum, and already beginning to exclaim against the noise of intruders that had caught their ears. But a few words from the priest silenced them; and, at his command, they hobbled up to afford perhaps the last service to their old master.

Cushneiche was the first to return to the castle, with the village physician. He found the apartment in which he had left Collum empty: neither he nor the old men were in it. He concluded that his brother had quickly arrived with the servants, and removed him. The priest reappeared, and took the same opinion. But immediately after, Felix M'Carty came into the room, followed by persons of his household, and disowned the proceeding they had attributed to him. Surprise now seized on all. They called out: the old echoes alone answered them. They went up to Padhre's cell; it was also empty. The servants were despatched for lights, to explore more minutely.

In the pause a new visitor was heard entering the ruin. It was Redmond. After the scene at Pratt's house, when his stupified thoughts had time to make associations, he concluded, although he had got no convincing view of the features, that the silent visitor could be no other than Padhre-na-Moulh; and, after another lapse of time spent in giving orders for the comforts of Ellen, and of her father too, he had walked to the castle. For the scene that awaited him in it he was little prepared; and we are as little able to do it justice by a description.

The father and son were roused from each other's embrace, by the appearance of the servants with torches. Being briefly made acquainted with the urgent business on hand, Redmond assisted in the search for Collum. The cell above was again examined; no one appeared. Redmond had the curiosity to try for the secreted box of arms and treasure; to his surprise it was not forthcoming. The ruin contained no other

rooms except the ground-floor, which all knew to be blocked up, and which Redmond, from recent experience, was aware could not be approached. Upon a supposition that the old men might have conveyed their charge to one of the adjacent ruins, all were explored, but to no purpose. The grounds immediately about them and near to them, underwent a further search. Hours were thus fruitlessly spent; the adjacent cabins were visited, and every inquiry made; and at last, as morning broke, Felix M'Carty, Redmond, the priest, and Cushneiche retired to Felix's house, leaving the servants to pursue a more minute and extensive investigation, and determined, themselves, to renew, in a few hours, an inquiry into the matter that so much confounded them.

But before the time of exertion came, a letter was left at the avenue gate, which seemed to forbid as useless, further attempts to discover Collum's retreat. It was written by his own hand, as follows:—

"I am not as near death as I believed I was; but were I to live a thousand years, I durst not, injured and excellent brother, think of again seeing your face. I told you as much in the castle, and now repeat my determination. Perhaps it would be the most precious part of my atonement; but I pray to be saved from it. I can undergo any thing but that. Farewell for ever! I ask you to visit my mendicant grave. No more. Be not disturbed about my disappearance, or my present fate. I am as well off as I deserve to be. And do not seek after me. Indeed, the search would be as vain to you as afflicting to me. How could you dream of my ever again mixing among men?

COLLUM."

This letter had not quite the effect of curbing Felix's and Redmond's anxiety to recover their brother and uncle; but still every inquiry proved useless. While Collum's friends knew not what to think, the country-people believed what they liked; and the old rumour, that Padhre-na-Moulh had been watched for the good

people by Daddy Clayton and his companion, now readily suggested the consistent story of his having been at last spirited away to some *rath* in the neighbourhood. Other accounts, said, indeed, that this could scarcely be, as, now and then, in the middle of the night, visions of the two aged warders had been seen hobbling through some of their usual haunts.

About a month from this time, the village schoolmaster and school-mistress gave their urchins a holiday, to witness a rare sight that the afternoon promised. Juan M'Carty and Rosalie D'Arnell were to proceed to church to be married. Mr. Fenelly, early in the morning, had performed the ceremony according to the usage of the Roman Catholic church, in satisfaction of Rosalie's scruples. The morning following the visit of Collum, Mr. Pratt took his daughter out of the country, leaving Redmond in possession of his house and estate, and also leaving his feelings free with respect to poor Ellen; and, yielding to the youth's ardent entreaties, Felix M'Carty, notwithstanding his uncertainty and affliction about the fate of his brother, agreed, at the end of a month, to bless Redmond with Rosalie's hand.

It was a clear, sunny day, although a cold one; and the village children, unloosed from their tasks, and their little nerves braced with the fine weather, came running and shouting into the lonesome church-yard, through an entrance from the village opposite to that by which the bridal party was expected from the adjacent country. Their little pipes rose high in talk and laughter, and they had engaged in their accustomed frolics over the headstones, when, upon a sudden, they grew silent, and crowded together in a corner, looking fearfully across the church-yard at two well-known old bugbears, Daddy Clayton and his tall helpmate, who appeared silently employed in digging a grave. Their work was nearly done, for they often paused, and placing one hand on the small of the back, as if to re-

lieve themselves from the effect of stooping and delving, and another to their eyes to shade off the sun, looked out in the direction of the road from the old castles, evidently expecting an arrival for which they stood nearly prepared. At last, with many weary groans, and some curses, they threw down their shovels, and sat under a drooping and leafless ash-tree, at the head of the open grave.

"Is it the inches iv him, Daddy, aroon?" inquired Thomaus; "for he's a lengthy corpse."

"Why, how long would you have id?" queried his fellow-labourer; "duv you think, for as fine a corpse as he makes, that it's your own may-pole of a carcass is to be sthretched in id?"

Thomaus, rebuked, was silent.

"I think I sees the boys bringin' him at last," resumed Daddy Clayton, as he again looked out—"an' they're just in time, sure enough;—for the bride an' the bridegroom cums on by the other road."

"How the quality 'ill wondher to be stopped in their pleasure, this day," remarked Thomaus.

"Yes, lad," grinned the other; "an' what questions they'll be puttin' us about the place we hid him, when, if they had as much gumption as a blind horse, they ought to rason wid themsefs, an' know we couldn't take him far; or, for the matther o' that (only them great ones are ever an' always thick in the skhull) sure they wur behouldin' not to lave the place, at the first goin' off, without risin' a stone or two from the bottom o' the stairs, any how; an' there they'd have him,—an' us along wid him—if that 'ud do them any good."

"I'd be very sorry they tuck the thought, Daddy; Padhre was so much agin their ever clappin' another eye on him; more-betoken' that he gave us the good lob to hide him well."

"Ay, ay, lad, you may say that; the lob he sent us for upstairs, 'ill give us somethin' to lave for a dacent wake an' a dacent berrin."

"The same we giv' himself, out of it, for as snug an' as close as we hid it from them that wasn't iv our own sort," replied Thomaus.

While they spoke, the more regular village sexton walked rapidly in from the village side, his spade and pick-axe on his shoulder, and began to dig a second grave, close by the broad pathway that ran through the church-yard, to the other entrance from the country.

"Here's more o' the welcome for the quality," said Daddy Clayton, hobbling to the sexton. After some conversation with the man, he returned grinning to his seat under the ash tree, and resumed. "A brave harse, wid white feathers, is just come into the village, Thomaus, lad; an' they gave the word to Jacky Sprucban to come off in no time, an' have the lodgin' ready; she's on her thravels from Dublin, we hear, an' left it to her death to lie out here, in the counthry air. Will you b'lieve me agin, when I tell you the thruth? Duv you remember my words on the bridge, beyant?"

"*Crosh-Chreestha*, is id her, in arnest?" asked Thomaus, in much surprise. They were interrupted by the return of the little boys into the church-yard, at different entrances, each party heralding two distinct processions. One was the bridal-equipages, friends, and attendants,—a number of village girls, dressed in white, walking two by two, at the side of the carriage which contained Rosalie and her father; the other was a train of ragged mendicants, some supporting, and the rest following the coffin of Collum M'Carty.

The two concourses met and obstructed each other in the middle of the church-yard. Redmond put his head out of his coach to demand the cause of the interruption, and the first thing that struck his eye was the name "Padhre-na-Moulh," painted black on the shining plate of the coffin-lid.

A few words of explanation, rudely or sneeringly vouchsafed by Daddy Clayton, possessed him and his father of the true state of the case. There was but one course. While the beggars hurried their former brother to his grave, and while Rosalie stopt in her carriage on the broad pathway, Felix M'Carty led his son, in his bridal clothes, to stand by till the coffin was lowered. This took some time: and ere the ceremo-

ny was quite over, the hearse of which Daddy Clayton had spoken, appeared coming from the village. The person who could have controlled this last interment, when he heard (as soon after his sudden arrival in the village, he did,) of the different kind of party some of his old friends had formed upon that day, persevered,—half in the indifference and selfishness of grief, half in the bitter hope of causing pain,—in commanding an immediate progress to the church-yard: and his Dublin undertakers, unaffected by local feelings, at once obeyed his orders.

Rosalie's carriage, having stopped by the side of the grave the sexton had dug, was obliged to draw back to give place to the hearse. Redmond and his father came from seeing the last sod laid over Collum, to extricate her out of her new embarrassment. At the first sight of the man who here stood, muffled in a mourning-cloak, at the head of the grave, Redmond started in horror, although scarcely a feature was visible over the high cape of the cloak. He glanced at the white feathers of the hearse, and grasped his father's arm for support. The protestant clergyman, compelled into his duty, appeared to discharge his solemn office. The silver-fringed pall was lifted off the coffin, and "Ellen Pratt, aged 17" became legible.

Rosalie caught, as soon as he, the name that smote him with indescribable consternation and sorrow, and, however it affected her, instantly stepped, in her white bridal dress, from her carriage. Tears streamed down her cheeks. She called together the village girls, who had voluntarily come to do honour to her marriage, and some left the church-yard, while the rest stood, two by two, round the hearse, each pair holding between them a white handkerchief, in the usual way in which village and country girls in Ireland attend the burial of a deceased maiden companion. And now it was seen by all, that Rosalie meant they should, for this day, bestow at the grave of her poor rival the honours they had intended for her wedding. The girls she had sent away, came back with a garland of the earliest flowers; and she took off her own white ribbons to intersperse

the flowers, according to custom, with the bunches they made.

Redmond and she stood hand by hand, until the grave was raised; their father, the villagers, young and old, and the crowd of mendicants, looking on. The garland was placed by Rosalie over Ellen; and it was many months ere the bridal party of that morning returned to the church-yard, to complete the wedding in which they had been so mournfully interrupted.

POSTSCRIPT.

A FRIENDLY critic has pointed out in the last chapter, a similarity between the incident of Collum throwing himself on his knees beside the girl in the chapel, and one to be found in the beautiful poem of "Paradise and the Peri." So soon as the critic spoke, we acknowledged the truth of his observation; but not pleading guilty, at the same time, to an intended imitation, and unwilling to deprive the story of an incident that assisted it, we have ventured, with this avowal, to appeal to the indulgence of the reader.

THE END.